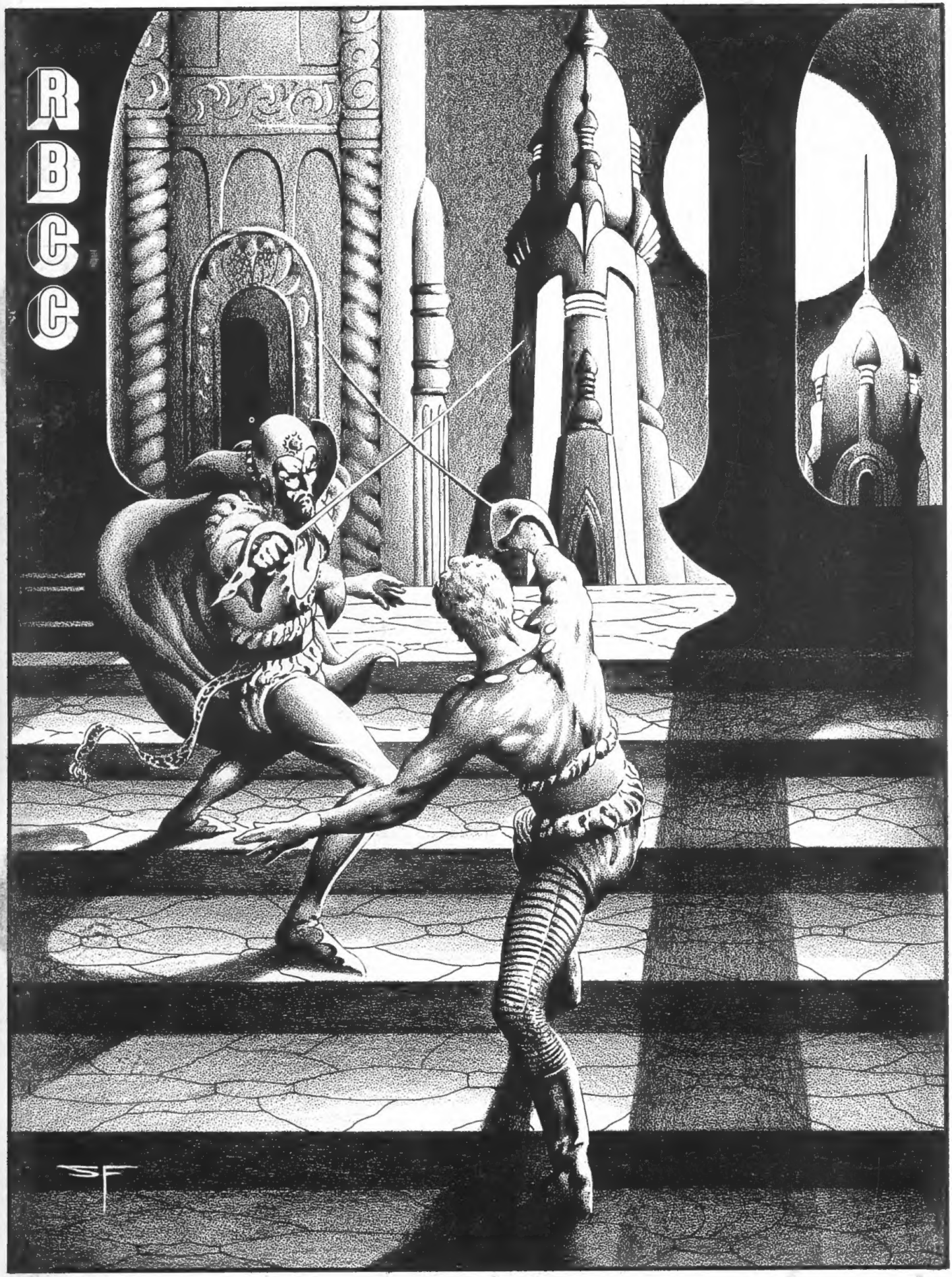
RBCC
SF

THE ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR #134

FEATURES:

RBCC CONTRIBUTORS - PAGE 3

EDITORIAL AND LOC'S - PAGE 4

FLASH GORDON - PAGE 6

COMICOPIA - PAGE 11

THE ROCKETS OF MONGO - PAGE 18

BUSTER CRABBE INTERVIEW - PAGE 20

FLASH GORDON SERIAL - PAGE 24

FLESH GORDON - PAGE 32

FLACH GORTON - PAGE 42

ARTIST PROFILE - PAGE 48

CRITIQUE - PAGE 49

COMICS COMMENTARY - PAGE 52

FACE-OFF ON "KING KONG" - PAGE 54

THE PERTWILLABY PAPERS - PAGE 56

FRONT COVER - STEVE FABIAN
BACK COVER - MIKE ZECK

IMPORTANT!

THE ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR THE ROCKET'S BLAST - COMICOLLECTOR

MARCH 1977

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HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS: $10.00 per page - These ads are reduced to occupy one-half page when printed in the RB&CC. ALL ads of this type MUST be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 paper ONLY.

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CIRCULATION: 1800 PER ISSUE

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FIRST CLASS: 5 issues $8.50, 10 for $16.00, 15 for $20.00, 20 for $26.00
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SINGLE COPY: Third Class-$1.50, First Class-$2.25

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AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF THE RB&CC ARE LISTED BELOW. THEY ARE $1.75 EACH FROM THE S.F.C.A.

#'s 57, 58, 106, 107, 117, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133

THE ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR is published by THE S.F.C.A., 6351 S.W. 43 STREET, MIAMI, Florida 33155. EDITOR EMERITUS: GORDON B. LOVE, EDITOR & PUBLISHER: JAMES VAN HISE
STAFF ARTISTS: Steve Fabian, Ralph Fowler, Mike McKenney, Don Rosa, Tom Sutton and Mike Zeck.
Contributions are always welcomed, but if you want it returned be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF THE RBCC ARE: APRIL 1
MAY 13

RBC CONTRIBUTORS

This special Flash Gordon issue had its beginnings about a year ago when I asked BRUCE PATTERSON to do a drawing for a FLESH GORDON article I was thinking of doing. His first version didn't appeal to me for various reasons and so he agreed to redo it. The months dragged by and I had almost forgotten about it when I received not one, but the several FLESH GORDON drawings by Bruce which appear in this issue. Bruce also wanted to do a logo drawing of me in the gigantic hand of the great God Porno. Bruce is generally quite busy working at Neal Adams Continuity Associates in New York but he took the time and put a lot of work into these drawings. I then got to thinking, "This stuff is too good to run with an article in an issue surrounded by a lot of unrelated material, so I conceived the ida of the Flash Gordon special. I had no idea then that nearly everything I attempted to line up for the issue would succeed, as well as some things I hadn't even asked for. I contacted STEVE FABIAN who agreed to do a drawing of Flash in a sword fight with Ming the Merciless. RON WILBER agreed to do a satire on Flash Gordon as his comic strip satires in the tradition of the old MAD comics and Will Elder are always enjoyable. I contacted MIKE ZECK about doing the drawing which appears on the back cover. While he was working on it he decided that the first version wasn't quite to his liking so he also did a slightly revised second version which also appears in this issue. Then about a month ago he mentioned to me that he was doing a short Flash Gordon strip for his portfolio (which he takes with him when he visits the publishers in New York, such as he will this spring) and offered it to me to use if I was interested. It appears as the lead feature in this issue. I mentioned the possibility to R.C. HARVEY of tying his column into the Flash Gordon special and he agreed to do an article on Alex Raymond. TOM SUTTON enjoys the centerspread format an said he'd be glad to turn one in for this issue (actually he did two Flash Gordon centerspreads and the other will appear next issue). I contacted the publisher of the now defunct THOSE ENDURING MATINEE IDOLS, a high quality zine devoted to movie serials, and he agreed to let me reprint their retrospect on the first Flash Gordon serial. I felt this would be important as it would demonstrate exactly how good a satire FLESH GORDON really was. RALPH FOWLER only had time to complete one drawing for it so I had MIKE ZECK do another of the destruction of the witch queen's swan ship. DON ROSA just made it under the wire with THE PERTWILLABY PAPERS and MIKE KUNTZ, an area fan, wanted to get in his say about the new KING KONG. ANDY WARNER not only did a fine drawing for the Buster Crabbe interview, but also conceived and designed this page, something which I feel the RBCC has needed for a long time to help give it more of a personal touch!

ZECK

FABIAN

ROSA

VAN HISE

EDITORIAL

For reasons usually obscure to me, I am sometimes accused of not being a comics fan because of "all" the movie oriented material I publish in the RBCC (and I suppose too because I publish ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS). These people seem to ignore or overlook the fact that I have been associated with the RBCC since 1970 and have been the sole editor and publisher since August of 1974. Virtually everything which appears in the RBCC I am responsible for in one way or another. Sometimes it is just on as basic a level as accepting a feature which is offered to me, but often the articles which appear here, and with few exceptions the cover artwork and special drawings, are thought up by me and commissioned from the people with the abilities to carry those ideas out. It is only rarely that a drawing submited to me out of the blue meets my high standards for acceptability. Partly to prove that I really am as interested in comics as films I've started my COMICS COMMENTARY column this issue. The other reason is that I've been wanting to include a column like this in the RBCC since I took over (see the inside front cover of RBCC #112) and finally realized that to get just what I wanted I'd have to do it myself.

Although I mentioned that I rarely find unrequested submissions of art acceptable, there have been times when I've been very excited by unsolicited material. One example is the Spider-Man illustration by Marc Hempel in this issue as it displays both style, ability and originality. One other time this occured was when Ron Wilber submitted his SPACE: 1999 satire which ran in RBCC #128. Ron has since become a regular contributing artist, as he presents no less than seven pages of his artistic contributions this issue.

Some people have misunderstood the purpose of the ARTIST PROFILE. It is not meant to be a biography of the artist, but just a profile as the title indicates. It's meant to tell you more than you knew about him before so that he's not just a faceless entity whose drawings magically appear each issue. Still, enough people have requested it have more depth, and so I will try to expand it whenever possible. The profile this issue on Ralph Fowler and by Ralph Fowler is much more like what many of you had requested.

It has been over a year since a Star Trek feature article has graced these pages and I'm making it official now that as long as ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS exists there won't be any more Star Trek articles in the RBCC as there just isn't any need for them here. I can do much more with Star Trek in ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS. For the most part RBCC readers would rather Star Trek be dealt with elsewhere than here. I concede!

There is a lot of artwork for sale this issue. The centerspread by Tom Sutton is for sale from him for $50.00 and you can write to him at: 40 Marlboro Street, Newburyport, Mass. 01950. There is also Mike Zeck art for sale at $25.00 per page. This includes the contents page (the original doesn't have the white lettering as that was added photographically when it was printed), the back cover and page 17, all of which are much larger than printed size. Include $1.00 per page for postage. Also all of the Bruce Patterson FLESH GORDON artwork

which appears in the article itself (but not the drawing here on the editorial page) is for sale. These are larger than printed size, except for the final one I'll list, and are done in brown and gray markers, looking even more stiking than they do in print! The full page of Flesh, Dale and the monster is $35.00. The rapist robots; the drawing of Flexi & Prince Precious and the drawing of the Amazon Queen & Wang (the last two being each 13" tall) are all $20.00 each. The Beetle Man-Penisaurus drawing is 11" tall and is $25.00. You can contact Bruce Patterson at Continuity Assoc., 9 East 48 Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.

I didn't make it clear above but the Mike Zeck art is for sale from me.

I would like to thank Jay Rubin for permission to reprint the Buster Crabbe interview. I also want to thank Robert Malcomson for permission to reprint the 8 FLASH GORDON serial pages from THOSE ENDURING MATINEE IDOLS issues nine and ten, originally published in 1971.

The INFORMATION CENTER is absent this issue both because of space limitations and because Don Rosa just moved and didn't have the time to send in the indexes as well as work on PERTWILLABY PAPERS. POINT / COUNTER POINT ran into some problems the last couple issues but should be back next time.

Next issue will feature a front cover by Mike Zeck of The Blue Beetle, an interview with Tom Sutton, and quite possibly Ron Wilber's second year sequel to his SPACED: 1998 1/4 satire, as well as other surprises.

This RBCC itself is a surprise as it contains more pages of articles and much more brand new artwork than any previous issue of RBCC in its 16 year history!

* * * * * * * * * *

Dear Mr. Van Hise,

After reading your review of THE NEAL ADAMS TREASURY, it is obvious that you are not aware of the fact that the information enclosed is directed to the true Neal Adams fan. If it were for the average comix fan it would include such old and used articles as ones on GL&GA.

Your last statement really deals the deadly blow, "The zine as a whole just does not live up to what the title would suggest, that it should be a publication to be treasured." Once again I must stress that this billing is directed to a true Adams fan and not to the person interested in such every day antiquties as more "wasted space" on the GL&GA series, which every true Adams fan has been bored to death with recently since most of it is stale information 5 years after the "Award Winning Series."

So next time you want an Adams article done get a real fan to write it.

Oh and yes, if any is interested in joining a Neal Adams fan club send me a S.A.S.E.

David Caffey
171 Perkins Ext.
Memphis, Tn. 38117

SINCE I HAD MY SAY ON THIS SUBJECT IN "CRITIQUE" THERE'S NO POINT IN GOING ON ABOUT IT AS I'VE HAD MY SAY AND NOW DAVID HAS HAD HIS. SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO FEEL THAT I OBJECT TO PEOPLE WHO DISAGREE WITH ME AND RESPOND VIOLENTLY TO THEM. NOT SO. I DON'T MIND WHEN SOMEONE WRITES TO ME TO DISAGREE, RATHER I OBJECT WHEN SOMEONE GOES SO OVERBOARD IN OBJECTING THAT THEY DO SOMETHING INANE OR RESORT TO UNDERHANDED METHODS MERELY BECAUSE I SAID SOMETHING WITH WHICH THEY DISAGREED. THIS PAGE HAS RECENTLY GIVEN A LOT OF SPACE TO THE KIRBY "2001" DEBATE AND ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE LETTERS I'VE PRINTED AGREED WITH MIKE McKENNEY, NEXT ISSUE I'LL BE PRINTING SOME INTELLIGENTLY WRITTEN LETTERS WHICH DISAGREE WITH MIKE'S OPINIONS OF JACK KIRBY.

Dear Jim,

There really isn't anything that could greatly improve the RBCC because it is the best that is published today! The only thing that I could say that would make me enjoy it more would be more news on comics and such. All though I am not a sci-fi addict, I enjoy the articles presented on it because I am new to that subject. The past articles on Magnus and the Black Condor were very enjoyable and interesting. Also keep the artwork from Mike Zeck coming! I think he is great. I met him at the '75 NY Con and he was very nice to me. We talked about his work and he even drew me a picture of Solomon Kane. Thanx Mike.

Good luck in the future, Jim.

Your loyal subber,
David Donovan
17 Fifth Avenue
E. Rockaway, N.Y. 11518

THANKS·DAVE. IT'S LETTERS LIKE YOURS THAT HELP ME GET THROUGH THE EIGHTY HOUR WEEKS I PUT IN. IT'S ALSO GOOD TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WILL APPRECIATE THE HERCULEAN EFFORTS EXPENDED ON SOMETHING LIKE THIS ISSUE.

FLASH GORDON
THE ROCKET BURST OPEN IN A FIERY EXPLOSION HURLING DEBRI HUNDREDS OF YARDS IN EITHER DIRECTION. THE HOLOCAUST SIGNALLED THE DEATH OF A SHIP BUT NOT SO THE CREW.
THERE IT GOES, DOC! DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO SALVAGE SUPPLIES.
HOW'S DALE?
A MILD SPRAIN. SHE'LL BE ABLE TO WALK.
WE'RE ALL LUCKY TO BE WALKING AWAY FROM THAT CRASH!
2000

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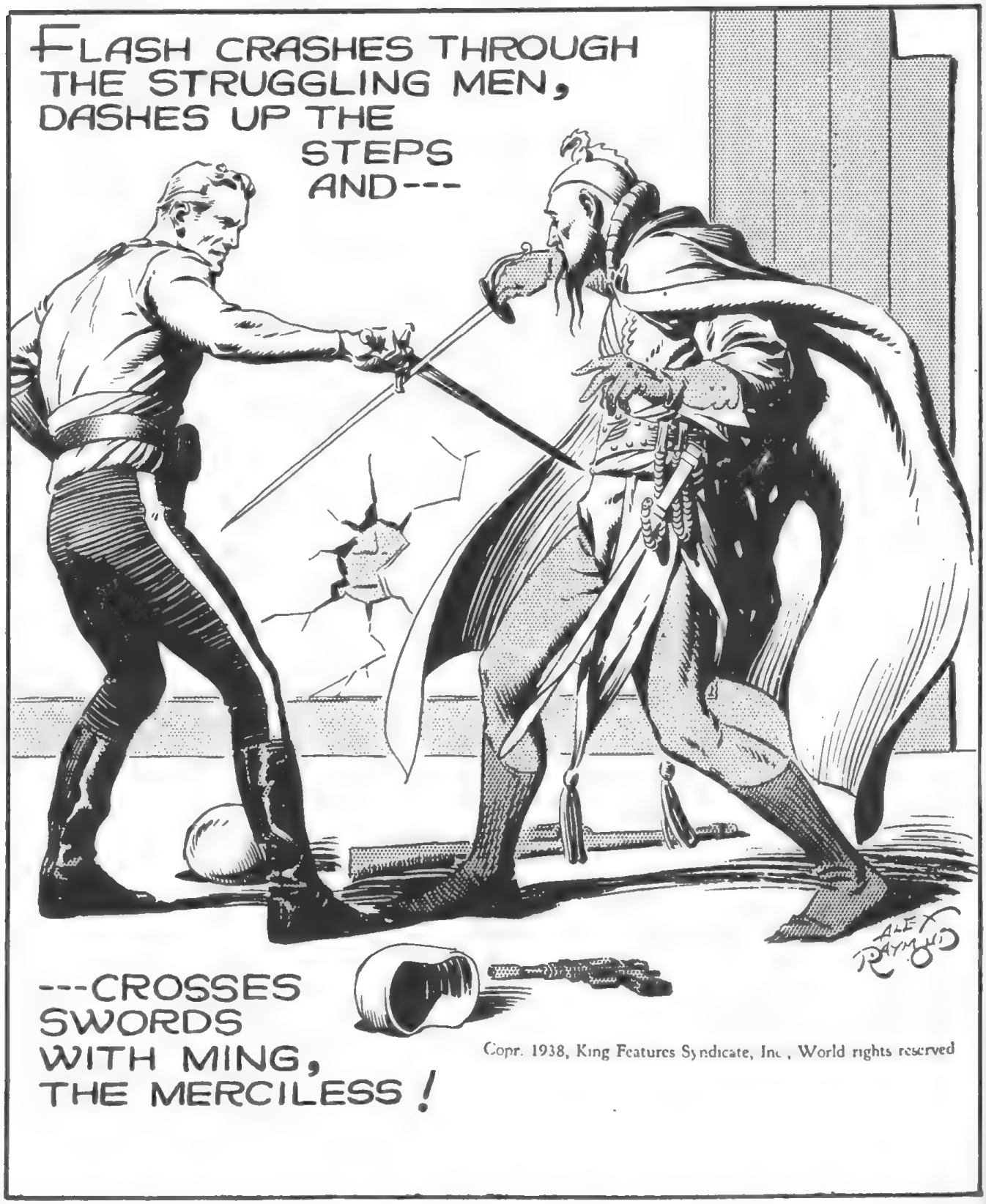
I DIDN'T SEE ANY SIGNS OF LIFE ON THE WAY DOWN!... ANY IDEA WHERE WE'RE AT DOC?
NONE, FLASH!... THIS AREA IS FOR THE MOST PART UNCHARTED.
I'M PRAYING THIS PLANET ISN'T AS DEAD AS IT LOOKS!
WE NEED TO FIND WATER SOON! WE WON'T LAST LONG IN THIS HEAT!
DALE'S RIGHT, FLASH. HOW DOES IT LOOK?
A LOT OF THE SAME, DOC....
WE'D BETTER KEEP MOVING. WE'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF FINDING SOMETHING WHILE IT'S LIGHT.
WE'VE BEEN WALKING ALL DAY AND I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN A BIRD!
WE MUST BE THE ONLY LIVING THINGS ON THIS PLANET!
DON'T GIVE UP DALE!
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP WALKING IF WE'RE GOING TO KEEP ANY CHANCE OF FINDING LIFE!

FLASH !!
I SEE IT, ZARKOV !
HE COULD LEAD US TO WATER !
WE'VE GOT TO SAVE HIM ...
FIRE !
SKREEE
ZAT!
ZZZT!

LOOK! HE'S DIVING INTO THAT HOLE!
HOW'S THAT FOR GRATITUDE... HE....
...HE LIVES UNDERGROUND... AND HARDLY HAS THE INTELLIGENCE TO FEEL GRATITUDE...
THE THING IS MENTALLY COMMUNICATING WITH US!!
NOT SO DIFFICULT WHEN ONE HAS DONE SO SINCE BIRTH... MY RACE HAS POPULATED THIS PLANET FOR CENTURIES... THE THING YOU SAVED SERVES NO PURPOSE ON THIS PLANET EXCEPT TO PROVIDE MY PEOPLE WITH FOOD....
...THEY ARE OUR SOLE SOURCE OF NOURISHMENT...
...YOU HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THIS.... IT IS UNFORTUNATE...
...OUR CITY LIES JUST BEYOND THE RANGE BEHIND YOU...
...THERE, YOU WILL FIND WATER AND SUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION MACHINES TO REACH ASSISTANCE...
...GO NOW... ...I AM BEYOND HELP...
...WITH LUCK, WE WILL NOT BE VISITED BY... ....EARTHLINGS.... ... AGAIN!

ALEX RAYMOND ILLUSTRATOR



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2701 Maplewood Dr., Champaign, Ill 61820

THE ART OF ALEX RAYMOND

ALL THIS HOOPLA is about a comic strip character. That Flash Gordon, Dale Arden, Ming the Merciless and all the rest have become a part of the American cultural heritage is, in itself, a testament to the power of the medium. Like Sherlock Holmes before him and James Bond afterwards, Flash Gordon leapt from the printed page into the hearts and minds of his readers and eventually assumed palpable shape on the screen. But even before his celluloid incarnation, Flash was already as real to his readers as it is possible for a literary creation to be.

The person chiefly responsible for all this was Alex Raymond, whose consumate artistry stamped the strip, the characters, and the stories with an illusion of reality that was more than convincing: it was spectacular.

Before Raymond gave up drawing FLASH, he had established the illustrative manner as one of the two most acceptable modes of rendering a realistic strip: with Hal Foster, Raymond attracted a following and thereby established a "school" that's only effective rival was in the impressionistic techniques of Milton Caniff and Noel Sickles.

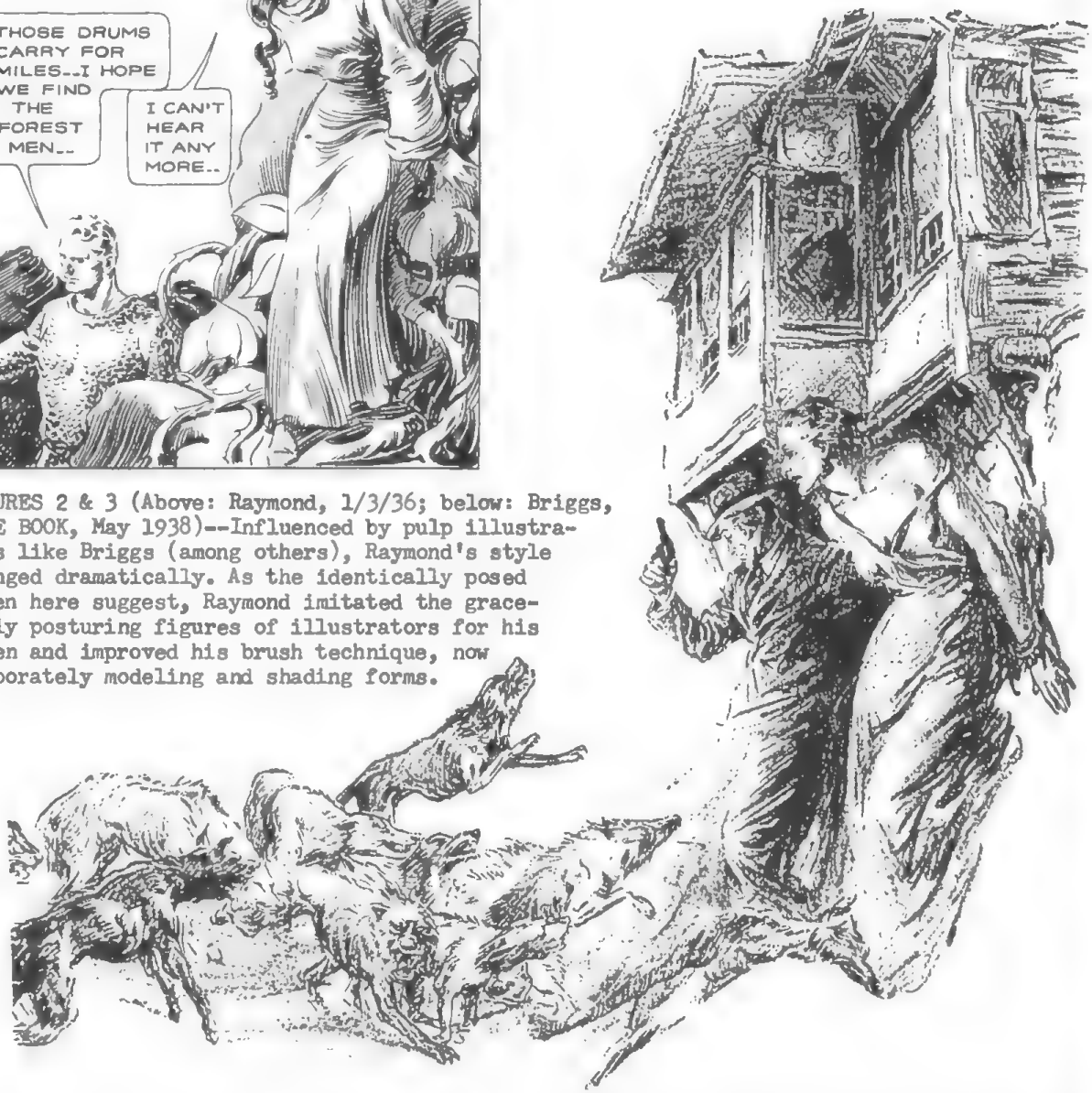
Raymond's influence would doubtless have been considerable through the panels of FLASH alone, but he multiplied its impact in two other strips. For a while, three of his strips were appearing at the same time: FLASH, SECRET AGENT X-9, and JUNGLE JIM. Eventually, he abandoned all three and created a fourth strip, RIP KIRBY--thereby becoming the first cartoonist to create four immensely successful comic strips. (In this regard, Raymond's only rival is probably Mort Walker.)

Although Raymond is no longer credited with single-handedly creating FLASH, it is nonetheless undeniable that it was Raymond's graphics that clothed Don Moore's stories in their most irresistible raiment. As Stephen Becker observes, "What made FLASH GORDON outstanding was not the story; along the unmarked trails of interstellar space any continuity was original. Nor were Flash and his lady friend radical departures from the traditional hero and heroine. But FLASH GORDON was beautifully drawn."

YES, BUT LOOK AT WHAT MY FATHER'S SOLDIERS ARE DOING.. A MAGNETIC LIGHT BEAM!
SO THAT'S THEIR GAME, IS IT?
I'M GOING TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THIS MOUNTAIN AND TRY TO WARN THOSE FELLOWS
FLASH! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AS FLASH SHOUTS AND WAVES HIS ARMS TO WARN THE LION MEN AURA CREEPS UP BEHIND HIM... SHE BRINGS HER SWORD HILT CRASHING DOWN ON HIS HEAD!
I LOVE YOU! DALE ARDEN MUST NOT BE RESCUED... SHE MUST MARRY MY FATHER, THE EMPEROR.. YOU BELONG TO ME, ONLY ME!

FIGURE 1 (4/15/34) --Compared to Raymond's later work, the early FLASH GORDON pages were artistically merely competent. Although superior to much comic strip art (BUCK ROGERS included), the simple outlined forms are not different in kind from those to be found in many strips of the period.

THERE IS NO ANSWER, SO FLASH AND DALE HURRY TOWARD THE SOUND....
THOSE DRUMS CARRY FOR MILES--I HOPE WE FIND THE FOREST MEN..
I CAN'T HEAR IT ANY MORE..



FIGURES 2 & 3 (Above: Raymond, 1/3/36; below: Briggs, BLUE BOOK, May 1938)--Influenced by pulp illustrators like Briggs (among others), Raymond's style changed dramatically. As the identically posed women here suggest, Raymond imitated the gracefully posturing figures of illustrators for his women and improved his brush technique, now elaborately modeling and shading forms.

This is not to deny Moore's contribution. His stories, built archetypally around Flash as god-like redeemer (the savior from another world, as Maurice Horn puts it), were suspenseful, fast-paced, and (Becker notwithstanding) ingenious. Horn is on sound ground when he notes that all the adventures, linked together thematically by Flash's role as redeemer saving a world from evil, lent to the strip some of the quality of an epic poem. But it was the visual impact of FLASH that gave the strip its special quality.

"The total effect," Becker says, "--slick, imaginative drawing with literate narrative --was one of melodrama on a high level, which should not obscure the fact that Raymond's villains were thoroughly wicked or that his female characters were generally sexy. FLASH rapidly became the premier space strip. It was wittier and moved faster than BUCK ROGERS; it was prettier and less boyish than William Ritt's and Clarence Gray's BRICK BRADFORD."

The graphic style that distinguished FLASH did not spring, full-blown, from Raymond's pen on January 7, 1934, when the strip's first installment appeared. As samples of the early FLASH (Figure 1) indicate, Raymond's style was at first thoroughly mundane--competent but undistinguished linework of

the ordinary outline variety. But before long, Raymond began to feel the influence of other styles of illustration, and the artwork in FLASH improved spectacularly.

IN USING the work of other artists as models for changing his style, Raymond was scarcely unique. Most artists are influenced by what their fellows do, and they borrow freely this technique and that. When the borrowing is well done, however, it goes beyond mere imitation and gives to the borrower's work a new dimension wholly his own. His work becomes an amalgam of all he has borrowed, unified by a single creative consciousness into something uniquely his--his own style.

It is not clear who influenced Raymond's emerging style the most, although there are several candidates--and Raymond probably borrowed a little from them all (and from some others as yet unknown). In an interview with Shel Dorf in a recent BUYER'S GUIDE, Jack Katz claims that Raymond was influenced by turn-of-the-century artist Franklin Booth.

"If you see Franklin Booth's art," Katz says, "you will just fall over backwards. He's got the city in the air exactly the way Raymond did it. I don't blame Raymond. Booth was fantastic! There's a book on him. In fact, when you see Franklin Booth, you'll say this is Alex Raymond, and I'll say, 'No, this is 1901.'"

In THE ADVENTUROUS DECADE, Ron Goulart picks out the influence of the dry brush technique in Raymond's developing style and concludes that Raymond was imitating the styles favored by pulp illustrators. Certainly that influence was felt.

Also among Raymond's models, Goulart says, were Matt Clark and John LaGatta. "From Clark's slick illustrations, he borrowed a good deal, including the prototype for the new improved version of his other hero, Jungle Jim. LaGatta he used for pretty girls."

Goulart spends a great deal of time in his book nudging idols off their pedestals--chiefly by disinterring the ghosts who labored in the shadows, creating reputations and fortunes for cartoonists who (Goulart implies) became famous solely by virtue of their assistants' talents. While the credit that consequently accrues to hitherto unsung artists is long overdue, Goulart's discovery of so many unacknowledged ghosts breeds a cynicism that infects the tone of his prose. The effect is that while crediting the obscure, he discredits the famous in scarcely charitable terms. It is in this spirit that Goulart discusses Raymond's relationship with his assistant, Austin Briggs:

"Another reason for the great leap forward in the drawing of FLASH was the hiring of the late Austin Briggs as an assistant. Briggs had been working, in such magazines as BLUE BOOK, with a heroic style similar to the one Raymond adopted in the middle thirties. When I interviewed Briggs /he said he/ thought he'd been associated with the FLASH page as early as late 1934 or early 1935. If this is so, a good many of the advances made from that point on are due as much to him as to Raymond."

IT IS GOULART's implication here that most seriously questions what remains of Raymond's reputation now that Moore is credited with writing FLASH. I'm not particularly interested in preserving

① FLASH AND DALE ARE LOST IN THE DISMAL JUNGLES OF BARIN--DURING THEIR SEARCH FOR THE CRAZED DR. ZARKOV, FLASH IS CAUGHT IN A STRANGLER VINE/---
----DALE'S TERRIFIED SCREAMS MINGLE WITH THE THUNDER OF AN APPROACHING STORM /-----

FIGURE 4 (1/31/37)--The illustrative manner soon pervaded FLASH. The spectacular brush work here is suggestive of the dry brush technique. Although Raymond used that technique occasionally, he normally kept enough ink on his brush to give his lines a liquid sheen. (Note the blending of the modeling on Dale's gown and the grass in which she stands.)

FIGURES 5 (top) & 6 (Briggs, 8/7/38)--Briggs' style, although more than competent, is sketchier than Raymond's. His outlining lines tend to be less continuous, and his solids and shaded areas are done with a drier brush, leaving more open spots of white. His work consequently has a less polished appearance than Raymond's.

undeserved reputations--Raymond's or anyone else's. But I am concerned that the kind of circumstantial evidence we see mustered here can be heaped up in this haphazard way ("If this is so...") to suggest that Raymond was little more than a hack with the good luck to have an assistant more talented than he.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the graphic style that so illuminated FLASH was not Raymond's but Briggs'. To say that a cartoonist was influenced by numerous other (and often more talented) artists in developing his style is one thing; but to imply that Raymond's reputation as an artist was stolen rather than earned is quite another.

GOULART may be culpable here only in the way he makes his assertion rather than in what he says. In any case, in order to establish the extent of Raymond's role as illustrator of FLASH, we should examine some of the evidence.

The Briggs illustration from a May 1938 BLUE BOOK (Figure 3) is clearly superior to the earliest FLASH drawings. Given only this sample (and without even considering what Briggs' worked looked like in 1934), there's little doubt in my mind that Raymond imitated the styles of pulp illustrators when he began to move away from the simple outlines of the early FLASH. His emerging style incorporates the same kinds of gracefully lounging women and heroically posturing men.

And the dry brush technique from which Raymond's style derives much (circa 1936-38; see Figure 4) is an undeniable echo of the sort of thing Briggs' illustration embodies. But newspaper comics pages are a different medium than pulp magazines, and on those pages of FLASH from the same year as this BLUE BOOK illustration, we have other evidence of Briggs' work.

The unsigned FLASH pages of that year are attributed to Briggs. On the unsigned page for August 7, 1938, we have a lot of pulp-illustration dry brush. But notice the sketchy outlining of Flash's arm and shoulder in one of the panels (Figure 5). Compare this to the firmer lines of Raymond's work. In comparison, Briggs' work is loose--airier, sketchier--more adapted to the pulp pages where the addition of gray fill-in tones flesh out the linework. Raymond's work doesn't need the gray tones.

This doesn't make Briggs the inferior artist. Loose and sketchy styles distinguished the work of Clifford McBride on NAPOLEON and Percy Crosby on SKIPPY. The point here has little to do with the relative merits of Briggs' work and Raymond's. If Raymond borrowed strategies of composition from Briggs and others and if he imitated graphic techniques, he also modified what he borrowed, adapting those methods to the conventions of newspaper comic strip graphics. He used the linear modeling of dry brush techniques but substituted an inkier brush for his rhythmically parallel lines of shading and modeling. And in place of the cross-hatched airy webs of tone, he used solid blacks or bolder lines that ran parallel rather than intersecting. As a result, Raymond's work appears more solid--his shapes more delineated and defined.

Briggs evidently felt less confident of giving his forms such clear definition, and when he tried it, the results were sometimes grotesque, out-of-step with the prevailing

graphic mood of the strip. Notice Flash's uplifted face in another Briggs panel from August 1938 (Figure 6). In modeling the chin with solids, Briggs gives Flash a double-chinned appearance. And the definition of Flash's right eye uses more detail than the strip's usual style. Briggs went too far in delineating clearly that eye: the addition of an eyelid undermines the impact of Flash's stare.

The modeling in another Briggs panel (Figure 7) seems executed with the same lack of confidence--or, rather, with the same diffidence about using solid heavier lines where Briggs' instinct may have been to use gray tones or webby cross-hatch. Compare the shading and highlighting of these two Briggs panels with a Raymond panel from May of the same year (Figure 8).

There are clearly two styles evident here. If you happen to prefer Briggs' style, then you probably would say his work improved FLASH (as Goulart says). If you prefer Raymond's style, you might say Briggs botched the pages he did. To some extent, then, the viewer's preference influences a judgment as to who influenced whom and with what effect. But this much is certain: there is a discernable difference between the work of the two men.

Because of that difference, it is not possible to mistake the work of one man for that of the other --at least, not in 1938, the time of these examples.

GIVEN ALL of this, my estimation of FLASH GORDON is that Raymond was the informing genius of the artwork. His style changed dramatically, true; he was obviously imitating the pulp illustration manner (among others) after the first months of FLASH. If Briggs joined him about this time, Raymond doubtless profitted from the association; he learned from Briggs. One might even go so far as to suppose that Briggs inked some of the earliest pages in the new style after first joining the strip. But given the differences that are apparent by 1938, it is clear to me that Raymond's hand is the one that gave the FLASH artwork its distinctive look. Raymond may have imitated slavishly at first (may have), but he evolved a style discernably different from Briggs' --a style that, in my opinion, is superior to that of Briggs and of the others Raymond may once have imitated.

RAYMOND'S STYLE slowly evolved through the FLASH years, and before he gave up his stint on the strip, he had abandoned the heavy lines akin to dry-brush for feathering and shading in favor of an elegant, continuously flowing slender line--starkly simple but luxuriously graceful in all its simplicity (Figure 10). Another influence doubtless at work--but no longer Briggs' if we compare his daily FLASH of the same date (Figure 11).

In all of the styles in which he rendered FLASH, Raymond responded to the influences he felt around him. But in his responses, he shaped a style of his own to fit his own sensibility, and the graphic accomplishment finally represented in FLASH is therefore Raymond's. His was the informing graphic instinct that adapted whatever he saw and liked to the demands of Don Moore's stories and his own sense of the visual--creating thereby a world of graphic illusion and an illustrative manner that have been often imitated

MINGO IS NOW A FREE REPUBLIC--MING, TELL YOUR ARMY TO THROW DOWN ITS WEAPONS!
NO! SOLDIERS, FIGHT FOR YOUR EMPEROR--DESTROY THE REBELS! I AM HELD PRISONER ON---
8-21

FIGURES 7 (top: Briggs, 8/21/38) & 8 (Raymond, 5/15/38)--Briggs' modeling of Flash's face seems more tentative, more searching, than Raymond's, in which the features are clearly delineated with solid black shadows rather than by sketchy lines that distort appearance.

FIGURE 9 (12/6/36) --Raymond's compositions are distinguished by the almost langorous grace of his figures. Although this scene portrays a pitched battle, the figures could be dancers in a ballet as gracefully as they posture. The elegant simplicity of Raymond's later linework underscored the graceful poses in his compositions.

TRAPPED IN A HUGE TREE IN THE FORESTS OF BARIN, THE THREE EARTHLINGS FIGHT OFF A FLOOD OF MAD SQUIRLONS...A SINGLE BITE MEANS MADNESS!.....

but seldom equalled since.

Unhappily, Moore's stories, for all their ingenuity of incident, were too fast-paced to allow much time for character development. Flash, the polo player turned savior, is everything we expect in an adventurer--courageous, honest, nobly motivated, and above all resourceful. But he is nothing more.

Apart from possessing the traditional traits of a hero, Flash has no personality. His love for Dale is perfunctory: he is the hero; she, the heroine --and the customary relationship between such persons is love.

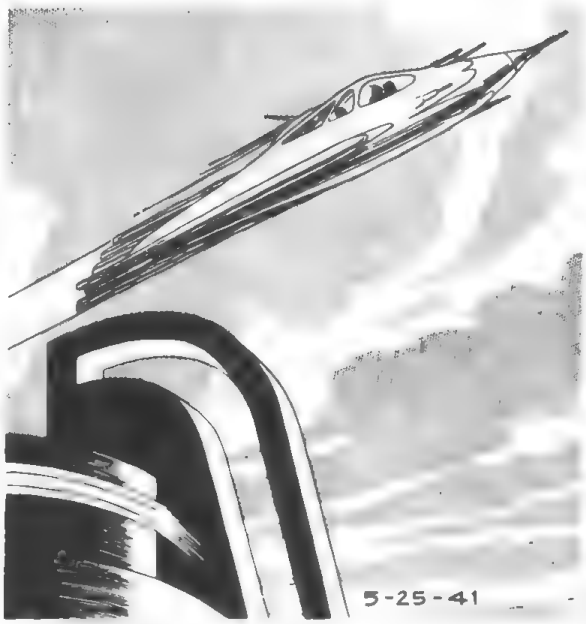
In Dale's pettish flashes of jealousy (which spark with such routine predictability), we see all the individuality that she is allowed. As Coulton Waugh says, "These lithe, sexy young people have an empty look--one feels that a cross-section would show little inside their hearts and heads."

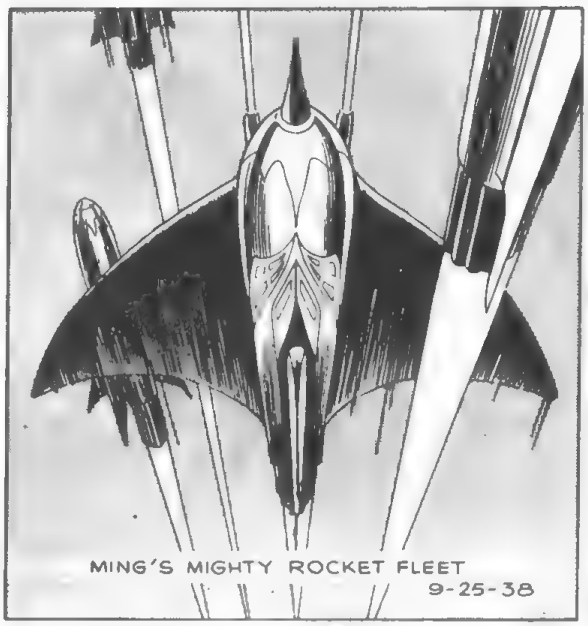
But with Raymond's drawing, we seldom notice this shortcoming. His graphics give the strip's characters such lifelike appearance that we overlook the absence of individual personality in them. The beauty of his visuals seduces us into believing in the characters. It is Raymond's art that brings FLASH GORDON alive; his art that makes the characters live in the minds of their readers. —HARV

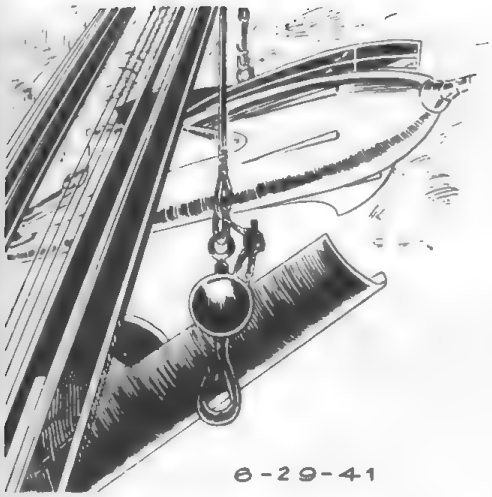
FIGURES 10 & 11 (left to right: Raymond, 6/9/40 & Briggs, 6/8/40)--By 1940, Raymond had developed a flowing, liquid line with extraordinarily slender grace, and he had simplified his style by abandoning much of the linear shading technique reminiscent of dry brush technique. Briggs, who then began the daily FLASH, also simplified his technique. Although his lines haven't quite the slender grace of Raymond's, this panel is remarkable in evoking the Raymond touch.

MING, PREPARED AGAINST A RESCUE ATTEMPT BY FLASH, BANQUETS WITH THE UNHAPPY DALE—"IF I KNOW FLASH," SAYS MING, "AND I THINK I DO—IF I CAN JUDGE BY PAST PERFORMANCES, HE'LL COME SOON—AND WHEN HE DOES---"
Copr. 1940, King Features Syndicate, Inc., World rights reserved.
6-8-40.

The ROCKETS of MONGO



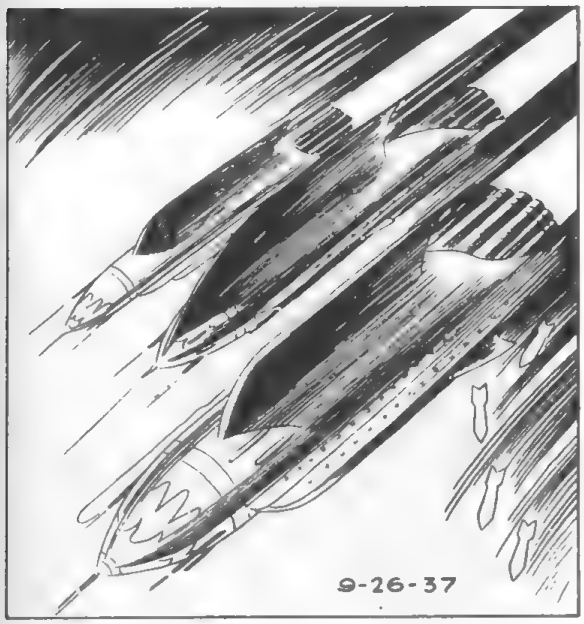




6-29-41

CLENCHED IN A DO OR DIE STRUGGLE, MING THE MERCILESS CRAFTILY USES THE ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC INVENTIONS OF HIS PLANET FOR DESTRUCTION ... ...

1-15-39

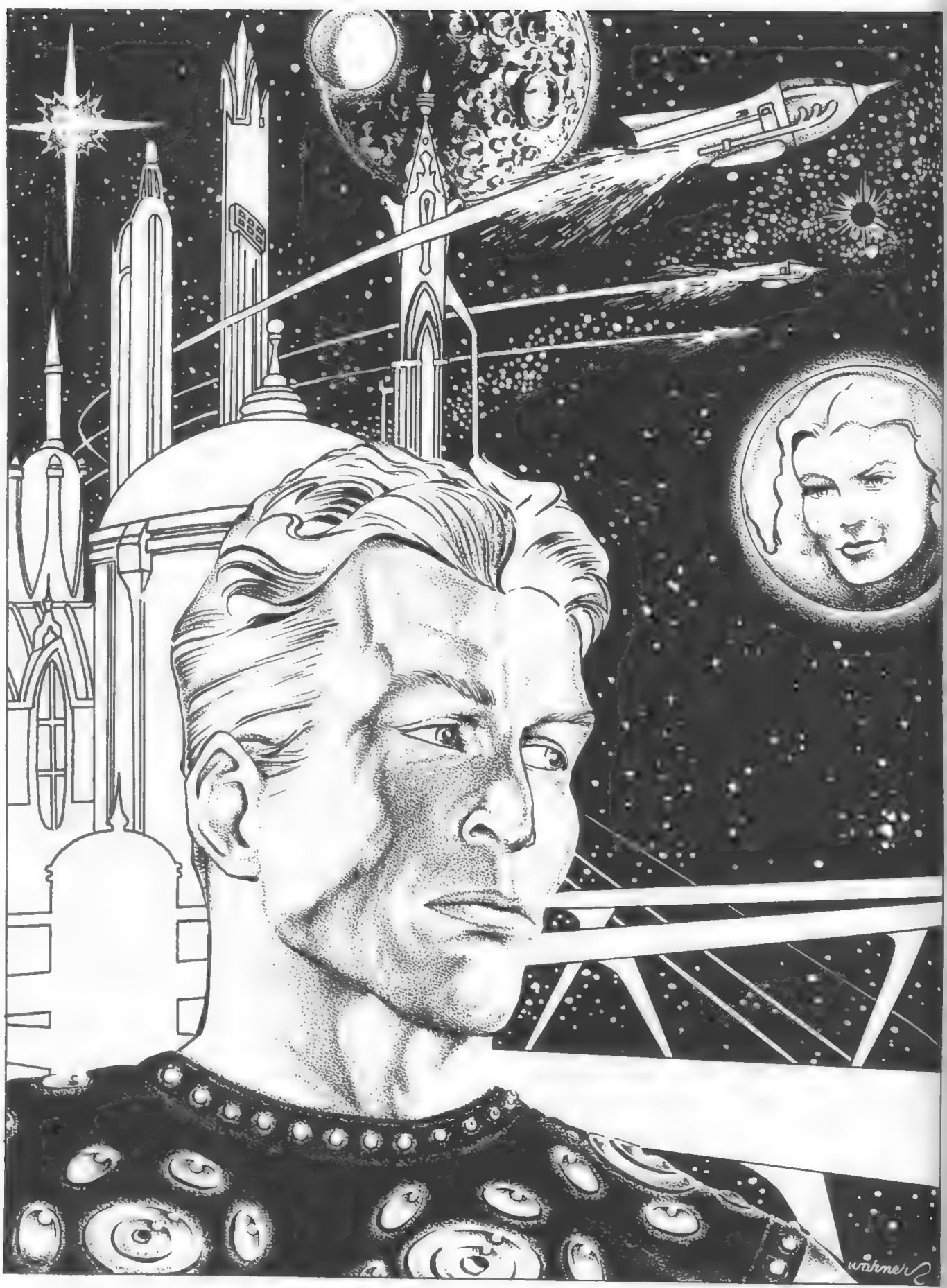


9-26-37

7-10-38

MING'S ROCKETS CHASE A BATTERED ROCKET SUBMARINE

ZARKOV'S RAYS TEAR MING'S ONCE PROUD FLEET TO SHREDS- 11-3-35


wahner

AN INTERVIEW WITH: *BUSTER CRABBE*

CONDUCTED BY JAY RUBIN

The following interview appeared the CLASSIC FILM COLLECTOR #43, summer 1974. This interview is reprinted with permission of the publisher, Jay Rubin.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Clarence Linden Crabbe, better known to movie fans as Buster Crabbe, alias Flash Gordon, Tarzan, Billy the Kid, Kaspa the Lion Man and Buck Rogers, was the guest of honor at the annual Burroughs Bibliophiles' Dum-Dum held in Toronto, Canada, in 1973. For those readers not in the know, a Dum-Dum is the name given to the gatherings held by the apes in Burroughs' Tarzan books. The luncheon meeting was most enjoyable.

Mr. Crabbe kindly consented to an interview for the CFC following the luncheon. To place this interview into proper perspective, you must picture the following events: Mr. Crabbe delivered a speech which contained the answers to many of this interviewer's questions. Immediately after the luncheon Mr. Crabbe engaged in an autograph signing under the glare of intensely hot television lamps, while this interviewer attempted to conjure up more questions. Finally, the interview began and appeared to be moving along without a hitch. However, approximately one-half of the way through the interview, this interviewer noticed that one of the record buttons on the borrowed recorder he was using had not been pressed. Of course, out of respect for Mr. Crabbe and embarrassment to himself, he did not repeat all of the previously asked questions. Needless to say, Mr. Crabbe was a gentleman and a good sport about the mix-up. Accordingly, for the purpose of constructing an entire interview, Mr. Crabbe's speech and the existing portion of the interview have been combined. In the cases where Mr. Crabbe's words are quotes from his speech, the questions originally intended to be asked and to which the words respond, have been inserted.

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU WERE RAISED IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS?

Yes, I was raised in the Hawaiian Islands. I'm part Hawaiian and very proud of it. Captain John Meek, who brought the first chickens, art, lumber, and everything from the Pacific Coast, was my great-great grandfather. He was born and raised in Marble Head, Massachusetts, (I talk with a long "A" every once in awhile) and went to sea when he was seventeen years old. He had his own sailing ship when he was twenty-one, and he worked for John Jacob Astor, the multi-millionaire, as did his brother. They worked up and down the Pacific coast. He settled in the Islands and married an Hawaiian girl, and that's how I came to have Hawaiian blood.

CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR FORMATIVE YEARS? DID YOU DO ANY ACTING DURING THIS STAGE OF YOUR LIFE?

As I said, I was raised in the Islands. I went to high school there, and spent one year at the University of Hawaii before switching over to the University of Southern California. As a youngster I did just about everything, but I wasn't an outstanding kid. I liked sports, health-exercises have been part of my bit all of my life. I ran around with my younger brother and four or five other guys and, as a kid going to highschool, I never went out for the Spring play. Can you believe that? I never went out for the Spring play. I worked as an office boy for a company in the Islands, and it was with that company that I was going to work as a corporation lawyer after I got my law degree, which was my intention. Of course, this never happened. Thinking back on it now, I know that corporation law at that time, not now, but at that time was kind of a research position. This wouldn't have held me. No doubt, had I gotten my law degree, I would have taken up criminal law. Maybe the ham that was latent in me at that time would have come to the fore. But this never happened.

CAROL HUGHES AND BUSTER CRABBE IN A PUBLICITY STILL FROM "FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE" (1940)

YOU HAVE IGNORED YOUR SWIMMING CAREER.

I learned to swim when I was four years old. In the course of my career I set 16 World and American records and won 35 National Championships. In the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, I didn't doo too well. I won third and fourth places. However, I won the gold medal in 1932 in Los Angeles. After I won the medal in 1932, Paramount made a series of tests, and I eventually got the part of Kaspa in KING OF THE JUNGLE. It was from a story written by the Englishman Stoneham, called The Lion's Way, a definite steal from Edgar Rice Burroughs, no doubt. You see, in 1931, Johnny Weissmuller was chosen to play the part of Tarzan in a very fine TARZAN film. He did 12,

I believe, for MGM over a period of 17 years, and then went over to RKO and did a couple of TARZAN films before doing JUNGLE JIM for Sol Lesser. (Weismuller made 6 for MGM and 6 for RKO). Weismuller, as you know, was raised by the apes and Kaspa was raised by the lions. I was always a helluva lot tougher than Weismuller.

DID YOU EVER COMPETE AGAINST JOHNNY WEISMULLER IN A SWIMMING MEET?

Johnny Weismuller and I competed in 1927 in a 300 meter race, and then in 1928, he quit. He beat me in 1927, but he could never beat me after that. He came along at the right time for the TARZAN films. We never really competed in the role, but he has constantly knocked me verbally in his book. I can honestly say that I am both a better actor and swimmer than he. He was a short distance swimmer, while I am a medium distance swimmer. He isn't even in the Master class today. He knew, after 1928, that he could never beat me in a race again. His career and mine paralleled each other pretty much. It was my victory in the Olympic games and not my acting ability, I assure you, that got me into films.

WITH YOUR DESIRE TO BECOME A LAWYER, DID YOU HESITATE AT ALL IN ACCEPTING PARAMOUNT'S OFFER?

I jumped at it, because at that time I was working in a stockroom making $8 a week. It wasn't the attraction. It wasn't the glamour of the film business that got me in there. It was the money. M-O-N-E-Y!! I was going to make $100 a week for 52 weeks, and I knew they were taking advantage of me--the publicity that I had locally in the sports page; and then nationally, and internationally, with my swimming. I knew that they were going to wash me out at the end of the year. But during that year, the first year at Paramount, I saved over $3,000 of the $5,200 that I got. I was in as far as college was concerned. I could then go back to put my time where it belonged--on my books. I would get my last three years, go back to the office, settle down, corporation law, nice little Hawaiian wife--IT NEVER HAPPENED! They took up my option at the end of the year! Had I been smart, I would have known that if Paramount had let me go some other studio would have grabbed me, actor unknown, because KING OF THE JUNGLE was very successful at the box office.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER PARAMOUNT TOOK UP THE OPTION?

It was then a whole new ball game. I settled down. I clowned around the first year. I went on the sets and met the actresses and actors. But then I settled down and thought, well, maybe just by some chance, maybe, this might be the work for me. My problem was to stay as long as I could, but eventually to get into the back, the outside of the camera, I was interested then in directing. As a matter of fact, in 1934, I had a talk with Dick Johnson, who was head of the production department at Paramount. I said, "Dick, I'm going to give up my contract. Would you put me on as third assistant here in your outfit so that..."

He said, "Don't be a damn fool. Come into my office." I did, and he talked me out of it.

DID YOU CONSCIOUSLY PUSH YOUR CAREER IN THE DIRECTION OF SERIALS AND WESTERNS OR DID THE STUDIOS TEND TO STEREOTYPE YOU INTO ROLES LIKE KASPA, TARZAN, FLASH

SENSATIONAL
FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS
From Alex Raymond's Astonishing Newspaper Strip
LARRY "BUSTER" CRABBE as "Flash Gordon"
JEAN ROGERS as "Dale Arden" - CHARLES MIDDLETON as "Emperor Ming" - FRANK SHANNON as "Dr. Zarkov"
BEATRICE ROBERTS as "Queen Azura" - RICHARD ALEXANDER as "Prince Barin" - MONTAGUE SHAW as "Clay King"
Original Story and Screen Play by Wyndham Gittens, Norman S. Hall, Ray Trampe, Herbert Dalmas
Based upon the newspaper feature "Flash Gordon"
Owned and Copyrighted by King Features, Inc., Jan 7, 1934
Directed by FORD BEEBE & ROBERT HILL • Assoc Producer BARNEY SARECKY
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

GORDON, AND BILLY THE KID?

It's a crazy thing about the picture business. I had a fair education, could talk, but after doing the Tarzan thing--"Me Jane, You Tarzan"--I had to live this down! It never happened! It's a frustrating thing when you would like to get a shot at a good, at a real good script, with a good director and a good producer who could help you--with a good cast; and then to be able to get in. If you fall down, fine but at least you have the chance to fall flat on your face, which never came to me. I was knocked-down, dragged-out, pulled off the horse guy, picking myself up off the ground all the time. This is what I did.

HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE KING OF THE JUNGLE WITH TARZAN?

My TARZAN?

YES, TARZAN THE FEARLESS.

No comparison. KING OF THE JUNGLE was a much better picture. It took fourteen weeks to make. It was better produced, with a better script, and a better director. We did TARZAN THE FEARLESS for Sol Lesser. Four weeks and that was it.

HOW DID YOU LAND THE ROLE OF FLASH GORDON?

In 1934-35, I read the FLASH GORDON strip every night. Old Flash and Alex Raymond. I met him later in '36-a fantastic guy. I read one day, in the summer of 1935, in the Hollywood bible, the Hollywood Reporter, that they were casting for the part of Flash Gordon. Out of curiosity, I assure, out of curiosity plain and simple, I decided to go out to Universal to find out who was trying out for the part. In those days you knew somebody who could get you on the set. I got out there, got on the set, and stood off to the side. There were 15 or 16 fellows there, and I had definite possibilities.

One would have made an excellent Flash Gordon, I thought. "George Berman! George has got to get the part." He was a nice kid. He was a health faddist.

Incidentally, I didn't know what a vitamin pill was in 1932, believe it or not. I went back, after seeing Jimmy Roberts wrestle, to congratulate him-he had retained the World Championship of Wrestling-and I saw him take some pills, "Jim, what are you doing." I thought it was the Wheaties, you know.

He said, "Vitamins."

"WHAT ARE THEM!!"

"They're good for you," he replied. So now everyday I take vitamins, minerals, wheat germ. Every day.

Anyway, I thought that Bergman would get the part. He didn't get it and I did. It was fortunate that he (the other fellow) didn't get the part, because two months later John Ford picked him to play the lead in an upcoming film, THE HURRICANE and the guy was named Jon Hall. That's the way it was with me all along the line.

HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE FLASH GORDON TO BUCK ROGERS?

I liked FLASH GORDON, because I had done two of them prior to the BUCK ROGERS. The material was fresher. I did FLASH GORDON in 1936 and 1938 and the BUCK ROGERS in 1939. I did the third FLASH GORDON in 1940.

ISN'T IT TRUE THAT THE RELEASE OF FLASH GORDON TO TELEVISION IN THE EARLY '50s SUSTAINED YOU DURING THAT PERIOD?

Well, yes. When television began to become important and started to gobble up a lot of film, they couldn't afford expensive films: the Clark Gables, the Cary Grants, and the Gary Coopers. They could afford a Western picture at $10 a run, or $15 a run. They could afford the serials at $5 to $10 a run. The first FLASH GORDON Serial was the biggest money making serial that was ever made, so naturally this brought me back. Kids were watching it, thinking it was a new series.

DO YOU THINK THAT THIS NEW POPULARITY HELPED TO LAND THE PART OF CAPTAIN GALLANT OF THE FOREIGN LEGION?

I think it was a throw over. Yes. But even CAPTAIN GALLANT was made in '54 and '56 and this was 20 years ago. I was younger and firmer, let's put it that way. I think of all the films I did, and I did a lot, about 185 including the serials, the ones that I liked best were from the FOREIGN LEGION series, because the little guy in the series, who is now 29 years old, was my son. Originally they had an English boy designed for the part, but I got my son Cuffy into the part.

WAS IT THE HARRY SALTZMAN OF JAMES BOND WHOM YOU WORKED WITH ON CAPTAIN GALLANT?

Yes, he took the money that he made in the CAPTAIN GALLANT series and bought the JAMES BOND series, a whole new thing.

DURING THIS PERIOD IN THE '50s WERE YOU MAKING FILMS?

I moved to New York in 1951. I had a chance to work on television with the BUSTER CRABBE SHOW. I ran serials and westerns. I thought I would be there for a couple of years. But it turned out that the two or three years I anticipate spending in the East turned out to be 22. We recently moved to Arizona. When I first got to New York, I'd go out two or three times a year to do a film. I did a lot of films for Eddie Small and for Sam Katzman-CITY HOUND and CAPTAIN SILVER, something like that. Then it got further and further away. In 1964 or 1965, I believe, I did two Westerns, one right after the other. One was with Day Duryea called BOUNTY KILLER, I played a sadistic heavy, a knife-thrower. I had more fun doing that picture. Then, God rest his soul, I did a very good color Western with Audie Murphy that same year, a thing called ARIZONA RAIDERS.

HOLLYWOOD AND ITS STRUCTURE HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED.

I am so happy that I was in Hollywood when Hollywood was "Hollywood" in the old days. It's a real sad thing to me (you can get sentimental once in awhile when you're 65) but I worked with a lot of just terrific people. I never went to dramatic school or anything like that, but I used to follow people like Frederic March when he was working on the lot, and be on his set every day. Every day, watching the man work, and trying to steal a little bit of this terrific talent that he had. It helped me in character acting, believe it or not. Actually, I was a heavy. I was always better playing the bastard than I was the hero type like Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers, Tarzan. I was a heavy basically. In the old days when you played the lead you had to look at a girl clean and all-Nothing! The hero couldn't get away with A NAUGHTY LOOK, but a heavy could look at a girl like he'd like to. He could get away with it. Anyway, in the old days there was J. Carrol Nash, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, Maurice Chevalier, W.C. Fields, Mae West, and best of all for me was a gal, God bless her (everybody love this gal) Carol Lombard. She was a great gal, a beautiful down-to-earth gal.

DO YOU OWN ANY OF YOUR OWN FILMS?

Yes, I have quite a few. I could have had all of them had I been smart enough. When I was a kid I could have gone into production and said, "Could I have a copy of this last thing I worked on?" and they would have given me a copy. Of course, I would have had a garage full of stuff now, but I didn't think about that until 2 or 3 years ago when the nostalgic thing hit.

WHEN YOU WERE MAKING "FLASH GORDON" DID YOU THINK THAT YOU WOULD BE CREATING A SUPER HERO OR CULT HERO?

I didn't think anybody was going to the movies. I thought this stuff was way out. Who's going to believe three people in a rocket ship? All of a sudden you land on Mongo, you run into Ming, you're in trouble...

UNIVERSAL PICTURES
PRESENTS

FLASH GORDON

Based On Comic Strip By
ALEX RAYMOND

Directed by Frederic Stephani
Produced by Henry MacRae

Flash Gordon	Larry "Buster" Crabbe
Dale Arden	Jean Rogers
Ming	Charles Middleton
Aura	Priscilla Lawson
Vultan	John Lipson
Prince Barin	Richard Alexander
Dr. Zarkov	Frank Shannon
King Kala	Duke York, Jr.
Officer Torch	Earl Askam
High Priest	Theodore Lorch
King Thun	James Pierce
Zona	Muriel Goodspeed
Gordon, Sr.	Richard Tucker

CHAPTER ONE

THE PLANET OF PERIL

TERROR AND PANIC spread across the face of Earth. A wild planet has been hurtled thru space by some unknown force, causing atmospheric disturbances of devastating proportions. Worse yet, it is on a collision course with Earth.

Flash Gordon, on his way home to spend the last few days of Earth's existence with his father (Professor Gordon), meets Dale Arden aboard a small passenger plane.

The plane is caught in the middle of a severe storm. An announcement is made by the pilot that parachutes were provided in the event the plane became endangered. Passengers are given the option of bailing-out, or chance riding-out the storm until the plane is able to land at its destination.

Larry "Buster" Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Lynton Brent

Flash helps Dale don her 'chute. But she is terrified (as are the other passengers, with the exception of Flash) when she approaches the hatch to jump out. Flash grins, seizes her about the waist, and leaps — both using Dale's 'chute for the descent to the ground.

Flash and Dale land safely. (This is observed by a Doctor Zarkov.) After disengaging themselves from the 'chute, they set out to seek shelter. They haven't walked far when they sight an odd shaped rocket. It is then that Zarkov makes himself known. He appears. and holds the two at gunpoint.

Flash and Dale each introduce themselves; Flash adds he has heard about Zarkov's scientific accomplishments. Zarkov relates his belief that the strange planet bearing down upon Earth is inhabited and radioactive. And he is positive he can fly to the planet in his rocketship (of his own design) and tap its energy, thus diverting it from its collision course with Earth.

Zarkov's intended assistant for the journey has fled. So he asks Flash to help him. Flash agrees with one stipulation — that Dale be taken along. At first reluctant, Zarkov finally acquiesces. The rocketship departs.

After a swift journey thru space, they land on the unknown planet (later identified as Mongo). The first form of life they encounter is a giant, carnivorous lizard. However, before they are devoured another lizard appears and attacks the one imperiling the earthlings.

Next, a rocketship comes on the scene and emits a strange ray that kills the battling lizards. When the ship lands, Officer Torch and two ray-gun carrying robots emerge. Torch announces they are captives of Ming — the self-proclaimed emperor of the Universe.

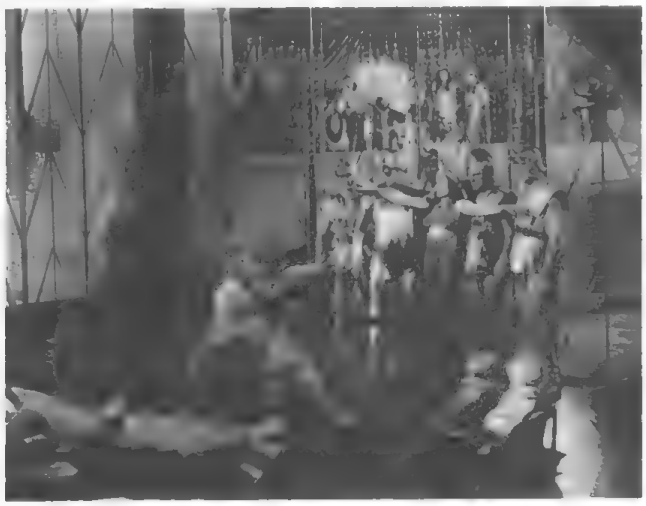
In the emperor's throne room, Ming questions his captives. He tells Zarkov that the collision course his planet is taking toward Earth is *planned*. Zarkov (seemingly turning against his friends) suggests Ming should conquer Earth, not destroy it. Ming likes the idea and sends Zarkov to his laboratory, promising him everything he needs (to accomplish the feat) *except his freedom*.

Then the plot takes on new dimensions as Ming gets his first real look at Dale. He is awed by her blond beauty. When he commences feeling her hair, Flash becomes infuriated and makes a grab for Ming's throat.

This incenses the emperor. He orders: "Throw him into the arena!"

Enter Aura, daughter of Ming. She strikes a bargain with her satanic father: "If he survives, he's mine."

Three animal-like men set upon Flash. After a ferocious fight, Flash bests his opponents. However, Ming reneges on his promise and now orders Flash to be hurled into the "pit" (of lizards). Aura protests and rushes into the arena. Guards are sent after Flash and another battle ensues.



Aura seizes the ray gun of a fallen guard and dashes to Flash's side. She fires. The ray hits a guard standing by a panel of levers (one of which controls the trap door to the pit). He pushes down a lever, sending Flash and Aura plummeting into a seemingly bottomless pit.

CHAPTER TWO / *THE TUNNEL OF TERROR*

Ming sees to it another lever is quickly activated when he frantically shouts: *"The net!"* (Editor's Note: A huge circular frame with a net appears and covers the pit *below* the falling Flash and Aura and *above* a bevy of giant lizards, of the variety seen in chapter one.)

Thru a viewer, Ming witnesses the fact Flash and Aura have escaped certain death. He orders guards to seize them both.

Aura leads Flash out of the pit area thru a maze of tunnels. When guards approach, they hide in a side tunnel. There, Aura feels Flash's muscles, then inquires if he loves Dale. Before he can respond, the guards have passed and they continue on until they come upon a rocketship. Aura persuades Flash to wait in the ship while she goes to her father to plead for Dale's safety. However, once Flash is inside she kicks away the boarding ladder and whispers that Flash will never see Dale again!

Inside the rocket, Flash finds a locker containing a much needed garment to replace his torn and tattered clothing.

Meanwhile, Ming goes to his laboratory. Zarkov informs him there is enough power in his machines to produce sufficient radioactive energy to conquer the Universe. Ming chortles and announces that is exactly what he intends to do, and to do it with Zarkov's aid.

In another room in the palace, Dale tells the High Priest of Taeo she refuses to put on the ceremonial robes he has ordered her to wear — much less marry Ming.

The Priest departs angrily and reports to Ming, who tells him to use a device called the "Dehumanizer" to cease Dale's opposition.

Back to Flash. An alarm sounds and he looks out to see an approaching armada of spiral-top "gyro-ships." Realizing his friends in the palace are in peril, Flash takes off in the rocketship to do battle.

His attack on the intruders is devastating. But, a collision with one of the foreign aircraft sends both spinning to the planet's surface, locked together. After the crash, a huge, bearded man (Thun, Prince of the Lion Men) emerges and attacks Flash. Flash is the victor, but when both realize they are enemies of Ming, they decide to become allies. Thun knows of a secret entrance into the castle and enters with Flash.

The two reach Ming's lab where Zarkov happily informs Flash that the planet has been diverted and Earth saved!

At this moment, a large idol is manipulated by the High Priest. It is the oracle which will decide whether or not the god Taco looks favorably on Ming's marriage to Dale. When Flash sees this on the tele-screen, he is determined to stop the ceremony.

An exotically gowned Dale, under the influence of the "Dehumanizer", is led into the ceremonial chamber. Ming is present as well as Zarkov, ostensibly to congratulate Ming. A gong is struck. When it is struck for the 13th time, the marriage ceremony will be completed!

As the gong rings, Flash and Thun make their way toward the chamber. However, they encounter a group of guards. A battle follows. Thun holds the guards in combat while ordering Flash to continue on and stop the ceremony.

Flash comes upon a huge set of doors. He finds a lever to open them — and enters a mammoth, mist-filled cave. In it, he sees a dragon-like monster with giant talons similar to a lobster.

The beast seizes Flash and in moments he hangs limp, a victim of "Ming's guardian of the caves"!

UNIVERSAL PICTURES
PRESENTS

FLASH GORDON

Based On Comic Strip By
ALEX RAYMOND

Directed by Frederic Stephani
Produced by Henry MacRae

Flash Gordon	Larry "Buster" Crabbe
Dale Arden	Jean Rogers
Ming	Charles Middleton
Aura	Priscilla Lawson
Vulcan	John Lipson
Prince Barin	Richard Alexander
Dr. Zarkov	Frank Shannon
King Kala	Duke York, Jr.
Officer Torch	Earl Askam
High Priest	Theodore Lorch
King Thun	James Pierce
Zona	Muriel Goodspeed
Gordon, Sr.	Richard Tucker

Written for TEMI by
Robert M. Malcomson

From Adaptation of Serial
Authored by
ERIC HOFFMAN

(Above: Dale, King Thun, Aura and King Kala.)

CHAPTER 3 / CAPTURED BY SHARK MEN

While the dragon-like monster has Flash in his clutches, Thun manages to best his opponent. He grabs a ray gun and rushes to the cave. Seeing Flash's peril, he fires the gun, hitting the dragon. The beast falls to the ground, releasing Flash.

Thun and Flash race to the ceremonial chamber to prevent the hypnotized Dale from marrying Ming. This they are successful in doing . . however, moments later, Flash and Dale plunge thru a trap door into a huge tank-like room filled with water. "Shark-Men" attack the two earthlings and drag them into a submarine-type craft.

Flash and Dale are taken to the palace of Kala, king of the "Shark-Men". There they are put in separate quarters: Dale in a beautiful apartment; and Flash is thrust into *another* tank-like chamber. Kala starts water rushing into the room. Dale, suspicious, sneaks into the throne room and hears Kala inform Ming (via tele-screen) he will return Dale to him, and eliminate Flash. When she demands to know what has become of Flash, Kala takes her to a view-port where she sees Flash treading water. Then, to her horror, Kala pulls a lever and a panel near the floor opens, revealing a huge octopus-like creature (called an Octosac). It swims into the room and pulls Flash underwater!

CHAPTER 4/ BATTLING THE SEA BEAST

Enter Thun in the company of Aura, now allies and out to save Flash. (Editor's Note: How they manage to get to Kala's palace is never explained.) Armed with a ray gun, they force the Shark King to drain the chamber. During all of this time, Flash frantically battles the huge Octosac.

After the water drains off, Flash crawls away from the dying beast. Aura opens the door and convinces Flash that *she* drained the water and Thun and Dale have escaped via a Hydro-sub to the surface. (Actually, Thun and Dale are holding Kala at bay in another part of the castle.)

As Flash and Aura make their way thru the corridors of the sea palace, they come across a master power control board. Aura blasts the controls with a ray gun. The act is disastrous: power and air are cut off, and the seams in the palace walls commence to break, letting in the sea.

Flash learns Dale and Thun are in the throne room. He rushes in. As Kala informs the group there is no escape, the main seam in the wall bursts. Flash, Dale, Aura, Kala and the "Shark-Men" are *engulfed in a gigantic wave of water!*

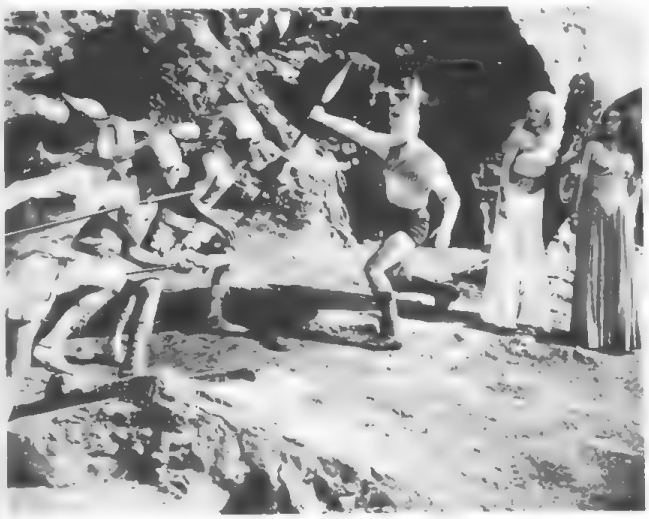
CHAPTER 5 / *THE DESTROYING RAY*

Ming in his laboratory sees via his tele-screen the peril his daughter is in. He tells Zarkov there is a chance to save them all — a device that will nullify the magnetic force that holds the palace under the sea and cause it to rise to the surface. He activates it . . . and within moments the palace is above the sea.

Aura wants them to go to her father's kingdom, but Thun, not trusting Ming, offers the protection of the land of the "Lion-Men". Flash agrees and the group, despite Aura's protests, leave via a tunnel on shore.

Back at the lab in Ming's palace, Zarkov has been watching the situation on his tele-screen. Enter Prince Barin, a heroic figure dressed in armor, helmet and cape. He reveals himself to Zarkov as the rightful ruler of Mongo, whose right was usurped by Ming. He allies himself with the earthlings . . . and he and Zarkov take off to find Flash.

A new menace perils Flash, Aura, Dale and Thun when they enter a strange valley: the "Hawk-Men", who fly like birds and dwell in a palace that is suspended in the sky of Mongo.



Flash takes off to scout the valley, with Aura close behind. Moments after she departs, Thun and Dale are captured by "Hawk-Men" and carried off into the air. At the same moment, Barin's rocket arrives and he and Zarkov rush to Flash's aid. Flash and Zarkov are reunited, and Barin is accepted as an ally by Flash. Aura demands she be taken to her father but Flash overrules the idea, stating he is tired of her treachery. The four get into Barin's rocket and head for the sky palace.

King Vultan, ruler of the "Hawk-Men", orders the castle defense, the "melting ray," to be turned on the approaching rocketship.

The ray strikes — and the rocket containing Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Aura plunges downward toward certain destruction!

CHAPTER 6 / FLAMING TORTURE

Barin's rocketship is saved when it gets "caught" in the anti-gravity rays holding Vultan's city in the sky.

Inside the throne room, Vultan pursues Dale and has her in his grasp when he is interrupted by the entrance of guards flanking Flash, Aura, Barin and Zarkov.

Dale with Vultan, King of the Hawk Men.

Flash, Barin and Thun are sentenced to the atomic furnace room below, shoveling raw radium. (The furnaces power the machines supporting the city in the sky.) Zarkov is spared because Vultan wants him to find a substitute for the dwindling supply of radium.

A full scale riot breaks out when Flash attacks one of the furnace room guards. Only the appearance of Vultan's minions with ray rifles halts it.

Flash is taken to the "Static Room" where (in view of Dale, Aura and Vultan) he is chained to a trapeze-like arrangement of electrode-bars and tortured by electrical shocks. As the current is escalated, Dale screams while watching his suffering. Flash suddenly goes limp, *apparently killed by Vultan's executioners.*

CHAPTER 7 / SHATTERING DOOM

When Dale faints, Vultan orders Aura to take her back to the women's quarters. But Aura quickly returns with a ray gun. She orders Vultan to free Flash. The unconscious earthman is taken to Zarkov's laboratory . . . and placed in a "reviver."

Once revived, Flash is returned to the furnace room. Zarkov is ordered to connect a wire to a metal band on Flash's wrist, the plan of the "Hawk-Men" being to electrocute Flash if he starts another revolt. While Zarkov is doing this, all are behind a huge lead wall — the only protection from the radio activity of the radium.

Ming flys to the sky city (with his full entourage, including the high priest of Tao) and demands the return of his "affianced" bride, Dale, and his daughter, Aura. Vultan defies Ming and cynically suggests that they talk things over.

Back to the furnace room. Zarkov sneaks in and connects the high voltage wire Flash wears to a shovel. Later, Flash is to throw the shovel into the radium-atom furnace. Then when the electrical charge is set off by the "Hawk-Men", the furnaces will be wrecked. But, Zarkov warns Flash and his friends that all must be behind the lead wall before the furnaces blow.

The plan goes as suggested . . . except that the gigantic explosion of the atom furnaces comes just as Flash is *starting* to leap over the wall. Seemingly he is caught up in the blast!

CHAPTER 8 / TOURNAMENT OF DEATH

When the smoke from the blast clears, it is evident Flash hurtled the wall in time. He, Thun and Barin take off for the throne room . . . only to be condemned to a firing squad of "Hawk-men" for blowing up the atom furnaces. As the guards take aim, the sky palace starts to tip. Zarkov rushes in, states he has a device to substitute for the wrecked anti-gravity force. He exchanges with Vultan his salvation for a sacred promise that all the prisoners will go free. (Ming is not considered a captive.) Zarkov's machine works!

However, Ming squelches Vultan's promise by demanding a "tournament of death," which, he states, he has a right to do as "Emperor of the Universe". And Flash must enter the contest!

Flash bests one opponent, only to have to take on another. He is given a small, razor-sharp dagger . . . and battles an ape-like beast with a unicorn horn in the middle of his forehead. Bleeding, cut and hurt, Flash is easy prey as the monster (an Orangopoid) *closes in for the kill!*

CHAPTER 9 / FIGHTING THE FIRE DRAGON

Aura learns (from the high priest of Tao) the only vulnerable spot on the beast is a white spot at his throat. She grabs a spear, gives it to Flash and tells him the target. His thrust hits the target!

Ming unhappily must make good his earlier promise: choice of bride for Flash and a kingdom of his own on Mongo. It is obvious to Aura that Flash will choose Dale, but the decision is to be postponed until a feast day.

The high priest knows Aura wants Flash and conspires to have him taken to the Sacred Palace of Tao where both will be safe from Ming's hatred. However, the journey lies thru "the tunnel of terror," home of the "Fire Dragon." The plan . . .

Flash is conversing with Dale when a guard brings in a goblet of wine, supposedly from King Vultan. Flash drinks. The wine has its effect, and he goes into a deep sleep.

Dale (with Barin) rush off to get Zarkov. Aura enters the chamber with some guards and the high priest. They spirit Flash away on a stretcher to the "tunnel of terror."

In the tunnel, they stop before a huge door and the priest opens it to check his calculations (at a certain hour the dragon sleeps). However, a guard rushes up informing the group they are being followed. Fearful for his own life, the priest turns traitor to Aura and rings the gong that awakens the dragon.

As Dale, Zarkov, Vultan and Barin enter, the huge monster appears, bathed in flames, and *advances on the helpless party!*

CHAPTER 10 / THE UNSEEN PERIL

As the dragon advances on the horrified group, Zarkov suddenly whips out a grenade and hurls it at the beast. The monster is killed!

Aura returns to Ming. He is elated to hear that the wine Flash drank contained "drops of forgetfulness." The way is clear for him to get Dale!

On the feast day, Flash is brought before Ming and asked to choose the bride of his choice. But he can't — he doesn't remember *anyone* there.

Later, a battle of wills goes on for possession of Flash's affections between Aura and Dale. Eventually Aura is successful in convincing him Dale is one of Ming's wives! But, Barin (after a struggle) manages to get Flash to Zarkov's lab where his memory is restored by the rays of the Electro-reviver. The joy of Dale, Barin and Zarkov is short lived when guards, led by Officer Torch, appear armed with ray guns. They have orders from Ming to kill Flash.

Zarkov tells Flash to stand against the wall, and is surrounded by strange gadgets. As the guards take aim, *Flash suddenly fades from sight!*

Doctor Zarkov

Thun, the Lion Man

High Priest of Tao

Ming and his ray-gun-equipped soldiers.

CHAPTER 11 / IN THE CLAWS OF THE TIGRON

When Flash vanishes, the soldiers react in terror. Zarkov explains to the bewildered Dale and Barin that Flash is invisible.

While invisible, Flash seizes Ming around the throat and demands the release of his friends, or what he is experiencing now will be mild to what will happen! Then Flash, still unseen, rescues the Hawk King (now his trusted ally) from Ming's dungeon.

Later, in the catacombs under Ming's palace, Aura and the keeper of the sacred Tigron (an animal resembling Earth's tiger) are with the beast when it suddenly breaks away from its leash and goes bounding into a tunnel. At the other end is Dale. She reacts in horror *as the monster springs at her!*

CHAPTER 12 / TRAPPED IN THE TURRET

Flash and Barin arrive on the scene . . . and Flash attacks the Tigron and kills it with his bare hands!

Dale is embraced by Flash. And Barin tells Aura that her efforts at treachery will not win Flash — but helping him will gain his respect and friendship. Aura agrees to do so, and intercede with her father.

Thru his spy network, Ming later learns of a plan by the earthlings (plus Aura and Vultan) to flee to the sky city. Before the flight they intend to rendezvous with Barin and his rocketship "at the old turret."

While the group is waiting for Barin's rocket to land, the ship suddenly fires upon them. They rush inside the turret house as the rocketship launches another bombardment, this time bringing the structure down upon them!

CHAPTER 13 / ROCKETING TO EARTH

As the rocketship continues its bombardment, Aura spots a trap door in the floor and all escape death when they flee into a cave below the turret house.

Meanwhile Ming had made a captive of Barin and used his ship as a decoy.

Flash and his friends return to Zarkov's laboratory, only to be made prisoners and taken to Ming's throne room. However, the "Lion-Men" in their "gyro-ships" victoriously attack Ming's stronghold. When Thun, Prince of the Lion Men, enters the room,

Dale, Barin, Vultan and Flash (invisible).

Ming flees and heads for the Sacred Palace of Tao (abode of the "Fire Dragon"). In a dramatic moment of courage, he walks thru the entrance . . . and is consumed by the deadly flames and smoke. This is witnessed by the high priest.

Time passes and Flash, Dale and Zarkov prepare to leave Mongo. Aura has become ruler of Mongo with Prince Barin at her side.

After saying goodbye, the earthlings take off in their rocketship. The high priest appears and informs Aura, Barin, Vultan and Thun that he has planted a time bomb on the ship!

In a tense few minutes, Barin manages to radio Flash about the bomb. It's found and hurled out of the spacecraft just moments before it explodes.

The fade-out comes with Flash and Dale embracing . . . and with a smiling Doctor Zarkov at the controls of the ship.

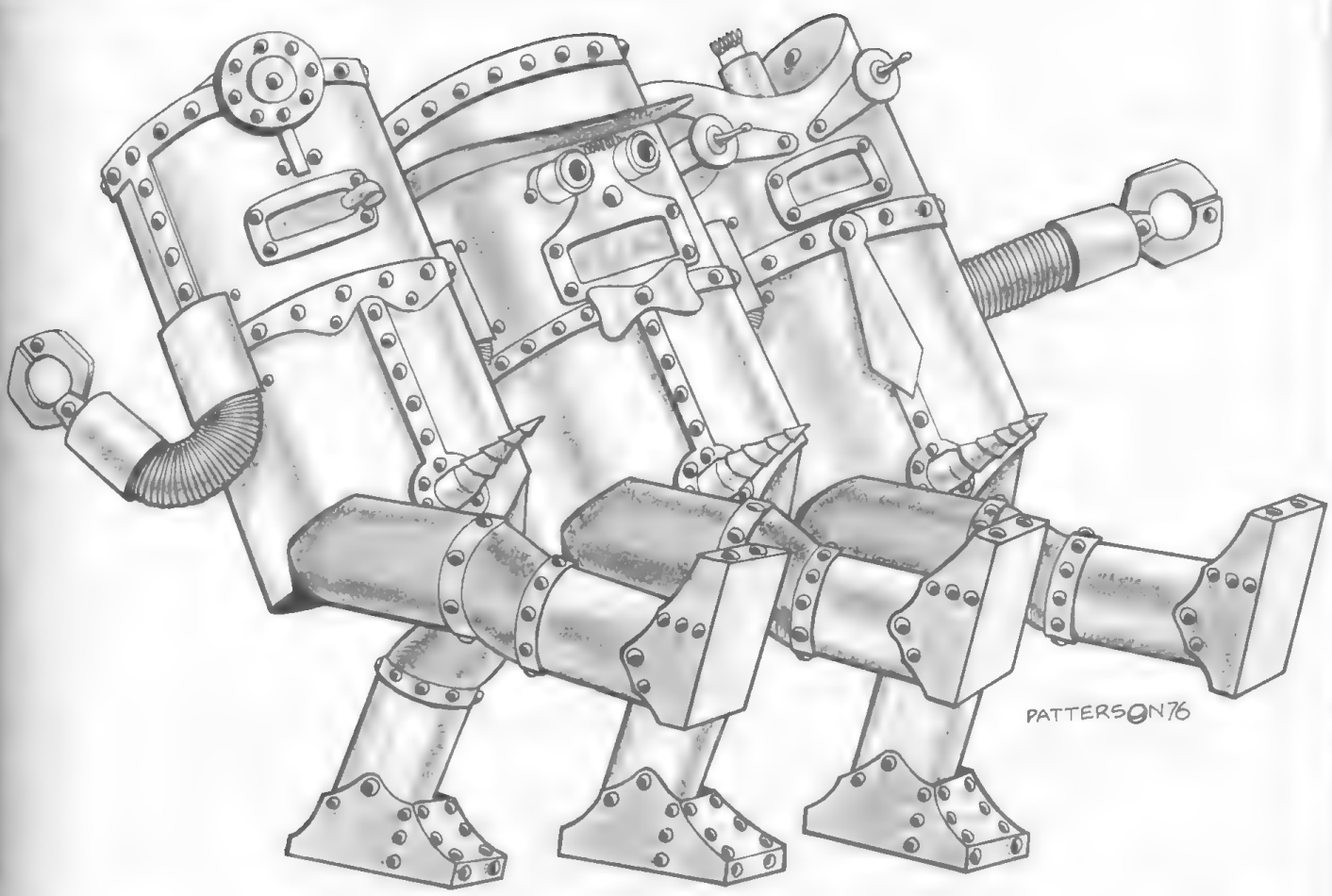
EDITOR'S NOTE

Priscilla Lawson (Aura) was 21 at the time FLASH GORDON was released (4/6/36). TEMI reader Val Warren (former associate editor of "K'Scope") relates that Priscilla was involved in an automobile accident, probably in 1937, that resulted in the amputation of her right leg. Today she is happily married and manages a stationery shop in Los Angeles.

Warren learned personally from Larry Crabbe that Universal had originally cast Jon Hall (then called Charles Locher—see pg. 99) in the role of Flash. However, producer Henry MacRae finally acquiesed to the insistent pleas of Crabbe and his agent for an audition. The rest is serial history.

This was writer Frederic Stephani's first (and last) direction chore. Tho unbilled, Ray Taylor had to step in to help complete the serial.

In chapter nine, the sacred god is referred to as Taeo and Taco. Both are incorrect. It should be Tao.



FILMS FANTASTIQUE

PRESENTS

"FLESH GORDON"

BY JAMES VAN HISE

"FROM 1929 TO 1933, AMERICA HAD BEEN RAVAGED BY A MERCILESS DEPRESSION. THE PUBLIC NEEDED SOMETHING TO HELP LIFT MORALE AND GIVE COURAGE. ONE OF THE GREATEST MORALE BUILDERS WAS THE CREATION OF THE SUPER HERO. FLASH GORDON, CAPTAIN MARVEL, BUCK ROGERS, SUPERMAN AND MANY OTHERS. THEY POSSESSED THE GOODNESS AND MORAL FORTITUDE WHICH THE COUNTRY COULD ADMIRE IN ITS TIME OF NEED.

"IN TODAY'S TROUBLED TIMES, WE THE PRODUCERS FELT THERE EXISTED A NEED FOR MORE ENTERTAINING HUMOR. REALIZING AMERICA'S RESPECT FOR THINGS OF THE PAST, WE, IN THE SPIRIT OF BURLESQUE AND SATIRE, HAVE CREATED A NEW FOLK HERO WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE OLD BUT THE OUTRAGEOUSNESS OF THE NEW.

"THE ORIGINATORS OF THE HEROES OF YESTERYEAR, AND THOSE WHO IMMORTALIZED THEM ON THE SILVER SCREEN AND IN COMIC STRIPS, PLAYED NO PART IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS MOTION PICTURE, BUT IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MADE WITHOUT THEM, FOR THEIR IDEAS AND VISIONS OF OTHER WORLDS HAVE BEEN OUR INSPIRATION. TO THOSE INNOVATORS, AND THEIR FANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WE DEDICATE FLESH GORDON."

The above words are spoken and appear on the screen at the openning of FLESH GORDON, a satire on the old Universal Flash Gordon serials which was released in 1975. Since the original serials were set in the 30s (which was the present, and not a period setting then) so too does FLESH GORDON take place in the thirties. It never comes right out and gives the date any more than the old serials did, but rather makes it obvious as to the time period at the beginning of the film when it shows Flesh flying back from Tibet in a "new Ford Tri-motor" along with some other passengers. This scene itself is a take off on the first serial done by Universal featuring Flash (FLASH GORDON, 1936). But the film as a whole satirizes both the first and the second serials (FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS) as the scene with the scientists debating the source of the "sex madness" as well as the introduction of Amora, Queen of Darkness

PATTERSON76

(a take off on Azura, the Witch Queen) are both inspired by the second serial.

But this film is no simple satire which swipes the old serials scene for scene with exaggerations. Rather it is merely influenced by these serials, paying homage to them while at the same time presenting an entirely original story peopled with some characters who are recognizable and some who are outrageously new.

Jason Williams as Flesh Gordon is more of a likeness to the comic strip Flash Gordon than the celluloid version. He in convincing in the part and plays it straight throughout, which makes it that much more enjoyable.

Suzanne Fields as Dale Ardor is patterned after the film version of Dale as in the first serial Dale was very blond and played by Jean Rogers, whom fields actually looks much better than.

Joseph Hudgins as Dr. Flexi Jerkoff is the spitting image of Frank Shannon who played Dr. Zarkov in all three of the Universal Flash Gordon serials. Even his voice is remarkably similar to Shannon's!

William Hunt as Emperor Wang is patterned after the exaggerated portrayal of the evil Ming as embodied by Charles Middleton in all three of the serials. His over acting is perfect and he is an excellent parody of the villain in early comics and serials.

John Hoyt, a little known actor who nonetheless has an almost endless number of credits in films and TV, appears briefly in the role of Prof. Gordon, a role for which he is perfectly suited because he looks like he could have appeared in a serial in any number of roles. Some of you may recall Hoyt in his role as the merciless crippled millionaire who bankrolls the rocketship built to escape our doomed planet in George Pal's WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE (1951).

There are also various other actors who are effective in their roles including the one who plays Prince Precious, the rightful heir to the throne of the planet Porno. I've been unable to correctly separate his name from that of the other supporting players but he is very good and amusingly enough bears a striking resemblance to Rob Reiner of ALL IN THE FAMILY.

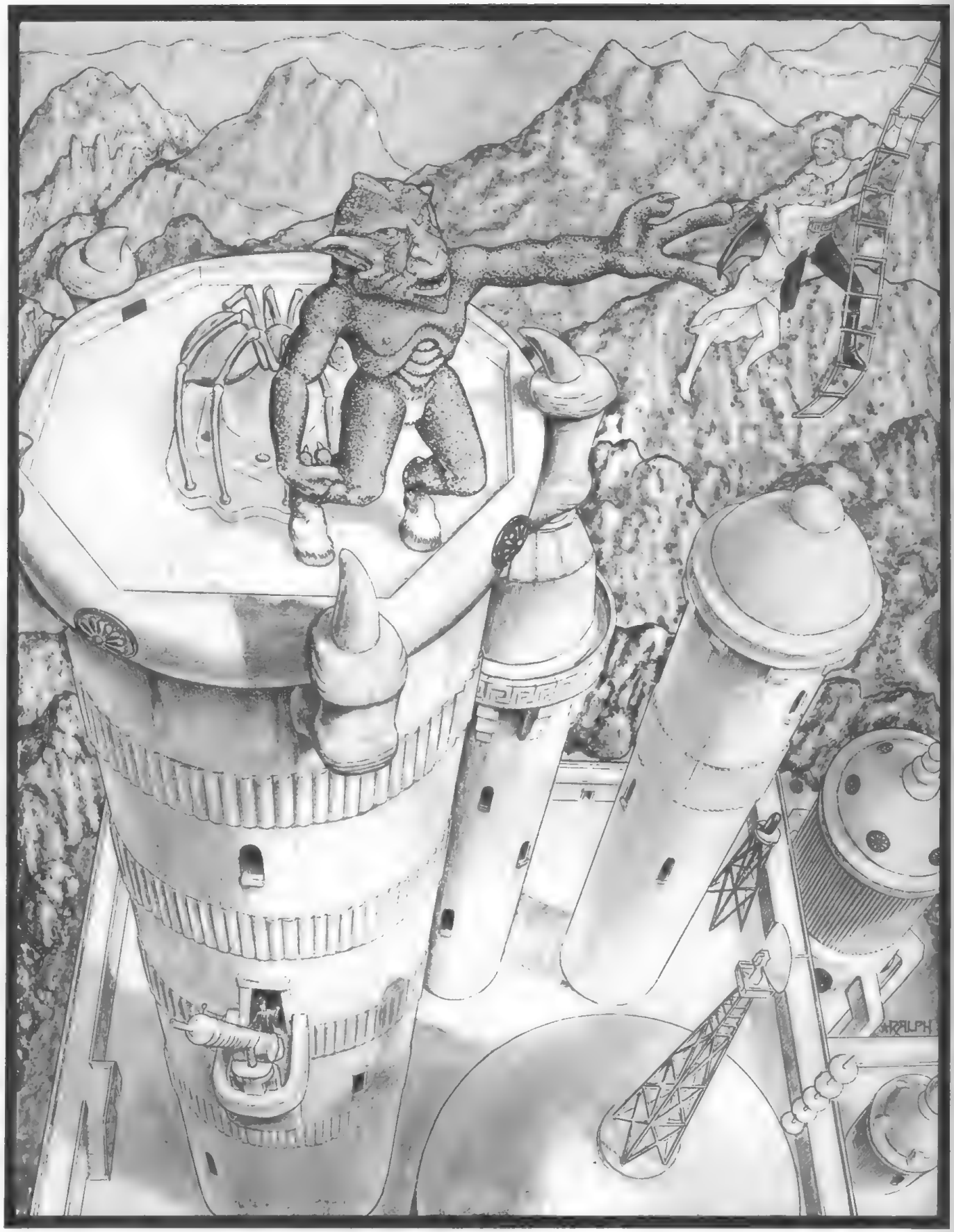
Some of the special effects technitions (who Lord knows have legitimate gripes against the producers of the film) have criticized the live action shooting as being below par. Yet the film's live action sequences are just as closely patterned after the old serials as some of FLESH GORDON's characters are. The scene of the Earthship sitting on the ground on Porno while Flesh and the others disembark is set up exactly as that same scene in the first FLASH GORDON serial is. Even the scene where Flesh and Dale meet Dr. Jerkoff after they parachute to safety from the striken Ford Tri-motor is the same as that similar scene in the first Flash Gordon serial.

There are also certain props and sets patterned after the Universal serials, including the interior of Dr. Jerkoff's rocketship and the throne room of Wang's palace. The scene of the mass of interwoven bodies in the midst of constant orgy is also inspired by FLASH GORDON as there is a scene in the throne room used in the credits of each chapter which shows a mass of people swaying back and forth in an almost hypnotic dance. This same scene appears in FLASH GORDON as part of the wedding ceremony of Ming and Dale.

The special effects people chose to forego a parody of the, by today's standards, crude special effects of the Flash Gordon serials. Instead they opted for work that was smooth and up to date, employing the latest methods of miniatures and stop-motion animation.

The credits for FLESH GORDON list Howard Ziehm, Lynn Rogers and Walter R. Cichy as "Special Effects Design and Direction." Those technitions who worked on the film steadfastly maintain that these people had nothing to do with the special effects, that they usurped this title as revenge against those people who

BELOW: PRINCE PRECIOUS, DALE ARDOR, FLESH GORDON AND DR. JERKOFF


RALPH

gave them trouble during production, trouble such as wanting to get paid and refusing to work unless they were! Although some of the technitions are credited on screen,such as David Allen and Mij Htrofnad (Jim Danforth spelled backwards), many others were not. David Allen worked so long as he was paid at the end of each day and Jim Danforth, who animated the Beetleman, also painted many of the matte paintings for the background of several scenes. Danforth was unhappy with the professional relationship he'd had with the producers and requested his name not be listed in the credits. Instead of removing it completely the producers included it spelled backward so that he could still point to the film as his work if he so desired. The producers did this for someone who didn't want to be credited, and yet struck the names of some who deserved credit.

Mike Minor, who previously did work for STAR TREK, such as masks and things, was with the film at its earliest stages but was uncredited on screen. Many of the effects technitions were having great difficulty getting paid and so in 1972 they got together and as a team, consisting of Mike Minor, Joe Musso, Joe Clark, Tom Scherman, Dennis Muren, Jim Danforth, Robert Maine, Bob Costa, Greg Jein and Bill Hedge, agreed to finish their work but to withhold 8,000 feet of effects negative until they were paid. In December, 1972, Graffiti productions paid up and the technitions left.

Some of Minor's work on the film included the models of the castle as well as Jerkoff's shack on the hill.

Why did these people have so much trouble with the producers of a film company? Because until Flesh Gordon all Howard Ziehm and associates had produced were pornographic films. They had been a small operation which turned out cheaply made films for a large return of profits. When they embarked on FLESH GORDON it was originally intended to be on a much smaller scale of production but as more and more people joined in the work the plans for the film grew as well. The producers knew nothing about special effects or the costs involved and this too caused delays. At one point they were raided and all the completed negatives from the film were confiscated along with their regular porno stock. It took months of litigation to get the negative back.

George Barr, the renowned fantasy artist, drew the fine one sheet poster for the film. He was also slated to design the openning credits but the producers reniged on the previously agreed upon price and Barr withdrew. George Barr was also uncredited on screen even though he designed the Penisaurus as well as other props in the film. At the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City he had a drawing he had done of Jerkoff's rocketship on display.

Of the film's three major special effects sequences, far and away the most popular is the final one of the

Great God Porno (also referred to by the film's technition as the Great God Nesuahyrrah. Spell it backward). No less than four different people actually worked on the final animating of this model. They are Rob Maine, Jim Aupperle, Dennis Muren and Jim Danforth who worked on most of the rear projection set-ups. Most of the actual animating was done by Rob Maine.

This sequence (photo at right) is so popular because for the first time in the history of stop motion animation the monster model was given a complete personality. Not only did it register facial expressions but it also talked! What an incredible idea! The voice used for it was perfect.

Those who did the final animating on the model in that special effects sequences are not the same ones who started out working with that model. The model was originally built by Mike Hyatt but after months of work Hyatt had not turned in any usable effects footage so the producer, Howard Ziehm, lured Hyatt away from his home to avoid trouble and had all of the special effects equipment as well as the model removed from Hyatt's residence. Hyatt claims there was no reason for this action, that he was ready to animate but was fired without good reason before he even had a chance. Hyatt also claims that Ziehm used him as a scapegoat because of how far over budget the film was running. Interestingly, Mike Minor, who has no reason to back up any false claims made by Ziehm and who himself had a bad business relationship with him, agrees that Hyatt was fired due to inability (see CINEFANTASTIQUE Volume 5 Number 2). After the model was removed from Hyatt, it was altered slightly before final animation. This model, on film, displays characteristic reminiscent of two of Ray Harryhausen's creations: the cyclops from THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD and the Ymir from TWENTY MILLION MILES TO EARTH. And yet it cannot be called an imitation of these as the model is very unique unto itself, employing a lot of imaginative detail in its construction. This model with its glowing eyes, curious gait, and outrageous dialogue forms the fitting climax to an outrageous film.

Another favorite sequence is Flesh's combat with the Beetleman. Although this armor plated creature is never referred to by this name in the film, this is what it has come to be known as by the fans. This sequence was very imaginatively animated by Jim Danforth who has the creature assume a karate stance just before it attacks. The matching up of live action with the animated footage is perfect and the entire scene displays some of the smoothest animation footage in the history of the cinema. There is a humorous gag played with this copper colored creature when it's killed by an arrow fired by Prince Precious. Just as the arrow hits and the creature dies it turns green! This happens very quickly and is often not noticed until subsequent viewings.

The delays in the making of this film were so massive that it was announced as being released on a future date, only to have that release date cancelled. In the February 1973 issue of PENTHOUSE, the men's magazine, there was a twelve page spread on "the new sci-fi spoof FLESH GORDON" which featured thirty-eight full color stills. Much of the information in the copy portion of the article was erroneous as it discussed a non-existent mask made for Chief Nellie and referred to the Great God of Porno as the Penisaurus. It wasn't until two years later that the film was finally released.

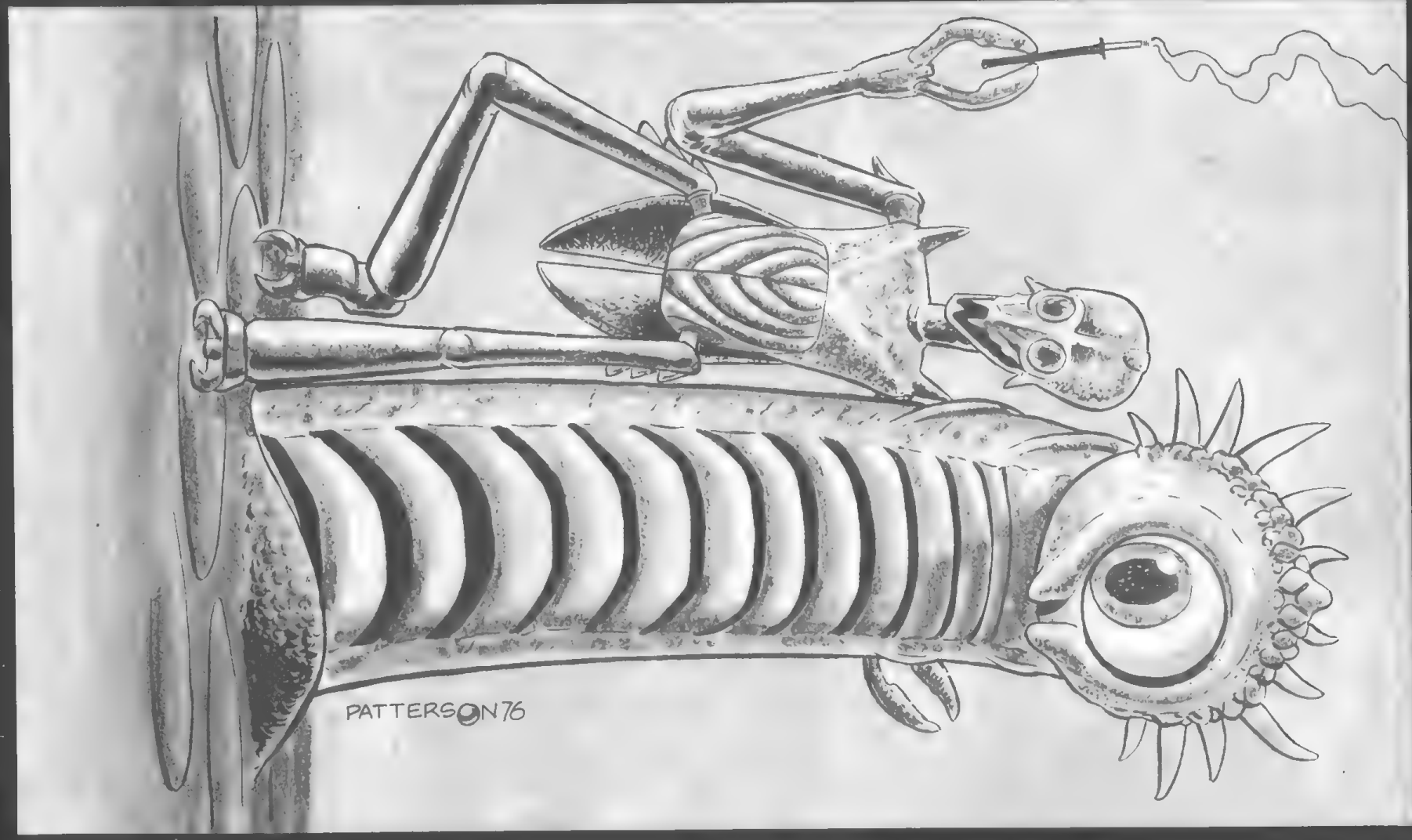
Originally, FLESH GORDON was released as an "X" rated film although it was a very soft "X" to say the least. The film THE GROOVE TUBE, released about the same time, was only rated an "R" but it was much more explicit and more deserving of an "X" than was FLESH GORDON. To try and reach a larger audience, FLESH GORDON was later released as an "R" and it was so chopped up and poorly edited that those who had viewed the original version found this edited rerelease unwatchable. Both versions are currently in release although like many recent films which go into rerelease no new prints seem to have been made and thus is often in very poor condition from wear caused by hundreds of screenings.

When I originally saw FLESH GORDON I found it to be disappointing in some way and rather silly. But when I went back to see it a second time to once more enjoy the fine special effects, I found that I enjoyed the film more as a whole. When I first saw it I thought it would be something clever and subtle when actually the humor is rather obvious and sophmoric. After finally accepting the film as the light, escapist satire it was intended to be I found I enjoyed it much more and was able to appreciate elements I had ignored the first time through. I had this same reaction to MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL (which was recently shown on television in a hopelessly edited version that was totally unenjoyable) which I have seen three times and which I get something more out of upon each new viewing.

Although at the end of FLESH GORDON a sequel is announced, this was probably done to once more imitate the serial format as it took so long just to organize and release this film that it is highly unlikely that a sequel will be filmed. Producer Howard Ziehm has said as much himself.

Like THE EXORCIST before it, the Academy Awards also ignored the fine special effects of FLESH GORDON as they only honor films which are popular among its member ship.

Special information for this article was obtained from CINEFANTASTIQUE Vol. 3 #4, Vol. 4 #2 and Vol. 5 #2 as well as from PENTHOUSE for February 1973. Many thanks to them for doing the <u>real</u> research for us all.


PATTERSON 76

GO TO YOUR STEREO, PUT ON A RECORD WITH MUSIC BY WAGNER, AND BE PREPARED TO ENTER A WORLD OF SPACE-ADVENTURE WITH-

LOOK, A WELCOMING PARTY!
1 2 3 4
BY THIS AXE I RULE!
MARS IS HEAVEN
BOY AM I MEAN!
YOU KNOW DOC, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT "UNWELCOME!"
WHEN WILL THEY LEARN DR. ZARKOFF?
WHEN WILL THEY REALIZE WE COME IN PEACE?
PRICES SLASHED!
SALAMIS
WE MEAN THEM NO HARM.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TAKE IT ANY-MORE! THESE FIGHTS, THOUSANDS OF BODIES SWEATING, PRESSING TOGETHER, ARMS HOLDING ME, HANDS GRABBING ME, FEET KICKING ME -
WATCH IT BUSTER!
THIS WAY TO COMEBACK TRAIL
YALE
IS YOUR NAME WILLIAM, SON?
NO IT'S RAY, MAN!
CAN I COME BACK TOMORROW FOR SECONDS?
WHICH TWIN HAS THE TONI?

NOW WE MUST HEAD FOR MNINGS STRONGHOLD, WHERE YOU WILL FIGHT HIM TO THE DEATH, FLACH.
GAS
DANGER! INFLAMMABLE!
BOOM!
I WILL IF YOU CAN EXPLAIN TWO THINGS TO ME ZARKOFF-
WHAT ARE THESE ROUND THINGS ON MY SHIRT, AND WHY DO I WEAR THIS STUPID THING ON MY HEAD?
THERE'S MNINGS CASTLE, LET'S GO!
THEY'RE SO STRANGE, ADAM!
ISN'T IT TIME WE RANN?
CLANG
TOOT!
BLAM!
MEGA-PHONE
LOOK OUT FLASH!
WHAT IS IT?
NOTHING, I JUST HAVE TO YELL THAT AT LEAST ONCE EACH EPISODE.
EH! WHAT SAY?
WHAT DID SHE SAY?
FAR-PHONE
SCRIK
THIS WAY
OVER HILL AND DALE.

I DON'T LIKE IT FLACH, THERE'S NO GUARD AT THE DOOR.
EVEN MORE SUSPICIOUS-
HMM... THIS PRINTINGS ON GLASS!
THERE'S NO DOOR!
WHERE COULD MNING BE?
X-RAY GLASSES
MAYBE IT'S JUST A HUNCH, BUT MY SIXTH-SENSE TELLS ME MNINGS IN THERE.
TODAY'S SPECIAL CRACKED-CRABBE
JOIN CUFFY CRABBE FAN CLUB
MIRACLE BODY SHIRT
OUR LAND IS ARID AND OUR REAL KING IS BARIN!
OH DARLING, YOU'RE SO ASTUTE!
STRAIGHT AHEAD
PLEASE!
MINING!
THIS WAY TO MNING!
YES HE'S IN THERE!
WALK RIGHT IN PLEASE!
THE DOOR IS NOT LOCKED
COME IN!
WELCOME
IF I WANTED TO MEET-
MNING I'D WALK RIGHT IN!
HINT-HINT-HINT-HINT!
BILL
POST NO BILLS!
WILLIAM
MNING, THE MNERCILESS!
FLACH GORTON!
ARE YOU TELLING THE TRUTH THUN?
NO I'M LION, MAN!
THIS IS RE-VULTAN!
50% OFF USED SHOWER CURTAIN

IT'S THE END OF THE LINE FOR YOU MNING!
SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL YELLOW-PERIL.
BANG
NOT REALLY FLACH GORTON, WATCH...
ACME MAKE-UP CO.
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM MR. SPOOK. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
FOR YEARS THE FEDERATION HAS WATCHED YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS INFLICT YOUR ILLOGIC ON THE UNIVERSE.
I AM NOT SPOCK!
KILLING RARE SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA, ALTERING CULTURES, FIGHTING, AND BLOWING THINGS UP.
I AM NOT PARIS!
IT'S MUCH TOO WASTEFUL AND ILLOGICAL, SO WE ARE TAKING OVER.
WHO AM I ANYHOW?
THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO LEONARD NIMOY.
VITALIS GIANT SIZE FOR YOUR WET-HEAD.
THE WET-HEAD ISN'T DEAD!
YOUR DAYS OF MIS-ADVENTURE ARE THROUGH, FOR THE GOOD OF ALL, WHY NOT RETURN TO EARTH?
BILL SHATNER SEZ: I FEEL LIKE A TRANSFORMED MAN.
LEONARD NIMOY MR. SPOOKS MUSIC FROM OUTER-SPACE
GO BACK TO EARTH?!
ARE YOU A REAL DOCTOR?
NO, AND I'M NO SCIENTIST EITHER.

RELAX DARLING, DON'T WORRY, WE CAN RETURN TO EARTH AND GET MARRIED.
WHAAA! I DON'T WANNA GO HOME! WHAAA!
JUST THINK, WE'LL RAISE A FAMILY AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER-AFTER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU AND ZARKOFF SAW IN SPACE TRAVEL ANYWAY. I JUST CAME ALONG FOR THE RIDE.
WHY YOU NEVER EVEN MADE A PASS AT ME FLACH! HOW DID YOU AND ZARKOFF PASS YOUR TIME? WHERE ARE YOU...
THE GREAT GOD IS MUCH TAO DEMANDING!
MEMO TO KALA THE SHARK-MAN "WE WERE JAWS KIDDING."
SO THAT'S IT!!! DOCTOR ZARKOFF YOU DIRTY OLD MAN!! AND FLACH... JUST WAIT'LL I GET YOU HOME!
YOU CAN TAKE THAT WAGNER RECORD OFF THE STEREO NOW, BECAUSE THIS IS THE END!

ARTIST PROFILE
RALPH FOWLER

My name is Ralph Eric Fowler, born July 11, 1953, a native Tampon (as in Tampa, Florida). Very limited education, no formal art schooling. What time I did spend in school I did projecting myself into drawings I did instead of the fundamental 3-R's.

I just started doing artwork for reproduction purposes a little over a year ago as a sideline while working full time as a progressive musician. After reaching a peak in music I decided to trade the ego boost of performing music for the self-satisfaction of artwork. I had considered being an architectural delineator but that would not have satisfied my desire to create. I've always been a sci-fi fan, mainly of sci-fi cinema because of the creative crafts involved in production and the visual impact. Visual impressions are the key. You have no doubt heard that a picture is worth a thousand words. Artwork done with artistic flair, technique and style is very pleasing visually. But there are already so many artists there. I started on the other side of the art spectrum and I want to do the best with the little niche that I'm in.

Why I specialize in space craft is because, like cars on Earth, they are a symbol of freedom, Until man evolves into a kinetic-energy life form he'll have to rely heavily upon space craft to act out necessary exploration, desires and also to escape overcrowded or hostile environments. The more complex space craft become especially where it involves size and capacity the more they merge with architectural concepts.

Why I am interested in futuristic cities is that cities are a symbol of security, progress, a place where man gathers together his achievements, enjoys them and preserves them.

My favorite artists are (in order) CHRISTOPHER FOSS: If you ever wonder what space craft and space structures will most likely look like, Chris Foss has, on his book cover art, shown the most advanced insight and realist-perfectionist technique of any sci-fi artist. So spectacular and impressive are his paperback covers which show nothing but space craft, he doesn't have to involve human or alien physical forms or action scenes that appeal to a broader, slightly less intellectual audience. ROBERT McCALL: He attempted to inspire people by a whole book of his visions of what man might achieve in space. His most famous and refined work was done for NASA; promotional artwork for "2001", and a 60' x 60' mural for the Smithsonian in Washington. He's been referred to as "Best Space Artist", a generalized analysis. His specialty is not necessarily his art technique, but the genius behind his concepts. You might note that many sci-fi movies have taken his ideas and turned them in to sets; the space station that was "Earth II" was his design; "Space: 1999" took his antigravity space port, built a massive model of it for one of their episodes, and then claimed that they didn't derive the design from his book. One of his most recent assignments was as production designer-consultant for the upcoming "Disney" disaster in space flick. DOUGLAS TRUMBULL for his space craft and technology related cinematographic achievements; "2001" and "Silent Running" to name two. It makes me sick that they keep trying to give Brian Johnson credit for special effects in "2001" when all he was was just a model builder. Douglas started in an architecturally related field, as did ROGER DEAN, an incredibly inspired artist who did a lot of work involving architecture and space craft.

There's a flock of artists and new S.F. illustrators using his ideas.

The limited artwork I have done so far has been but a primitive climb up the ladder to super-realism in art. I try to force perspective and use contrasts to give my work depth and something more than a two dimensional appearance. In my motion picture reviews (such as "Silent Running" in RBCC #132, "Flesh Gordon" in this issue and "Logan's Run" which is soon to come) I try to make details stand out that were previously unnoticed. I also like to recreate scenes from a different vantage point. In the original artwork I do I would like to, within my field of specialties, present thought provoking spectacles, with possible underlying philosophical themes; new concepts and combinations of concepts done in a realistic-dimensional style that will have enough visual impact and detail to keep the eye and mind interested. In my style I put as much detail as possible. Many artists, going by artistic rule, pre-focus the viewer's eyes on the main subject. By detailing all parts of the picture, I let the viewer focus his own eyes on what interests him the most. Another interesting aspect is that in a "spacescape" there would be no loss of detail with distance, with no atmospheric interference, a concept that many artists with Earth-bound art training aren't hip to.

Eventually I would most like to do paperback books (hard to believe, as primitive as my style is now), although if I thought it were possible I would also like to work in motion picture special effects.

One thing I want you to understand about my artwork is that I try to make my renderings as accurate and detailed as any photo (if not more) which takes a lot of time in conception. Of course I don't use an opaque projector, which nearly all of Norman Rockwell's paintings in my lifetime involved. I do things the hard way. For example, in the "Silent Running" scene I did with Dern hitting the Drone, I had to make a miniature of the A.T.V. which he was driving, draw it as it would be seen from about 3 scale feet away, draw from the Drone model I built as it would be seen from 1 1/2 to 2 feet over it's shoulder, and quite a few other steps to try to take all these 3 dimensional objects and work them together into some sort of composition.

If I were doing original artwork such as in the drawing I call "City" (E.I. #2); I think it up, sketch it out and throw it all together in less than a week!

CRITIQUE

10. Superb
9. Excellent
8. Very Good
7. Good
6. Fairly Good
5. Fair
4. Tolerable
3. Poor
2. Very Poor
1. Worthless

CRITIQUE is basicly a review column, but we will not specificly recommend that you buy or not buy a particular item. We will review each item to the best of our ability and let each reader take it from there. We will be reviewing almost any item (fanzines, prozines, records, portfolios, tapes, posters, or just anything of general interest) with one exception. We will not be doing any SFCA publications for obvious reasons. CRITIQUE offers a readership of nearly two thousand and CRITIQUE will also offer the publisher of any item we review up to one hundred words of free space to rebut his review, if he chooses to do so, providing his review is less than an "8" rating. All rebuttals to appear in the next column must be in our hands at least five days before the ad deadline of the next RB&CC or they will be run in the following issue. If you have an item you would like reviewed, send a copy of it to: CRITIQUE, 6351 S.W. 43 STREET, MIAMI, FLORIDA 33155

A few things to remember: Where UNDERGROUNDS are concerned, you must be 18 or older to order them. All fanzines reviewed are 8 1/2 x 11 with offset printing and wraparound binding unless otherwise noted. From time to time there may be a publication over which two of our reviewers have wide disagreement and in which case two reviews of the same book will be run in the interest of fairness.

A FINAL NOTE: The only reason for CRITIQUE is as a service to fandom. If you appreciate what we are trying to do then let us know. Your support can be shown in numerous ways: If you order an item because of our review then please mention CRITIQUE in your order, and of course the RB&CC would appreciate your subscription and advertising support. Naturally, your comments are welcomed.

JAMES VAN HISE / EDITOR

ARIEL #1 - $5.95 - 84 pages (9 x 12) - Published by Morning Star Press, P.O. Box 6011, Leawood, Kansas 66206

This volume, subtitled by the publishers as "a fantasy magazine", is an ambitious attempt to take the art and article fanzine further than it has gone before and raise it to a pinnacle of previously unachieved intellectualism. But to do this you need people who are actually intellectual, and who don't just think they are.

The main example of this shortcoming in ARIEL is in the Frank Frazetta interview, conducted by the publisher Armand Eisen, who continually compares Frazetta to the loner personality exemplified by Marlon Brando in THE WILD ONE, asking the most absurd questions in doing so, and even has contrasting photos of Frazetta riding a motorcycle with similar photos of Brando right next to them. He even analyzes the movie while talking to Frazetta and draws very shaky parallels. I'm surprised Frazetta put up with it.

The 16 page Richard Corben strip "Den" is reprinted in full color from GRIM WIT #2 and although it's nice to have it in a more durable format color printing needs a coated paper, not the uncoated stock used here, for the best results. So although it looks very nice, it's not as perfect as it could have been.

A four page article on pulps is pretty much a waste of space as it says too little about too much, mostly just saying that the old pulps were pretty amazing. It is the type of non-information information which is often used as filler in MEDIASCENE.

Six pages are appropriately devoted to Hogarth and a discussion of his new Tarzan book, and this is a very worthwhile feature.

A five page article on Batman discusses the character's metamorphosis and although it isn't bad it strikes me as the kind of article someone would do because they couldn't think of anything better to write about, and there are a lot better things worth writing about in comics.

Following this are six pages which I object strongly to. They are a six page excerpt from BLOODSTAR by Richard Corben, another Morningstar Press publication. I don't believe the reader should be expected to pay $5.95 for a book like this and then be subjected to a six page ad disguised as a feature.

There is also an article on "Conan the Existential" which spends four pages explaining how Conan is what he is because he made himself what he is. It's okay.

There is also some fiction, two poems by Robert E. Howard, a biography of Frazetta and an article discussing his artwork.

The front cover is in full color and is by Corben and the back cover is the Frazetta Conan painting from CONAN THE CIMMERIAN, cropped slightly though.

All in all, ARIEL is an ambitious attempt which in this first issue lacks mainly in imagination in choosing subject matter and waffles back and forth from very good to very fair.

RATING 7 / JAMES VAN HISE

HOT STUF' #3 - $1.50 - 60 pages (7 x 10) - Published by Sal Quartuccio, 770 East 45 Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203

I'm not thoroughly familiar with the first two issues of HOT STUF', but I know enough about them to know that there's been a slight format change. The first two issues were done as 8 1/2 x 11 slick, general material fanzines, whereas HOT STUF' #3 is more like an underground, in both size and content.

I might clarify here that the reason I'm not very familiar with the first two issues is because upon looking through them I was not at all impressed. The art and layout was professional and attractive enough, but the material just seemed too boring and meaningless. As a whole, it seemed like a pointless mishmash of artistic experiments that failed.

HOT STUF' #3 at least has a unifying theme. The entire issue is called a "special 50 page fantasy novel", centering around an evil and immortal sorcerer and necromancer named Roodmoth Urthruk. The tale chronicles portions of his eons-long existence, and the effects his powers have had on a land called Estravan, and the surrounding areas and oceans.

The story is told in several chapters, each one drawn by Tim Kirk, Richard Corben, Herb Arnold or Stan Dresser. All but one of the chapters (the Dresser strip) are written by Herb Arnold, and it seems he did so just for the hack of it.

Artwise, HOT STUF' #3 is only fair. The Corben art is, of course, the best, but with the Herb Arnold script (which Corben collaborated on), it can't com-

pare with some of Rich's Warren material, or BLOODSTAR. The Tim Kirk art is nice, as it is a bit of a rarity in this form. The Stan Dresser art (an artist we first saw in FANTAGOR) is probably the worst. Dresser has an interesting style, but it just isn't "comics", and he doesn't spend enough time polishing it up. When we first saw Herb Arnold in FANTAGOR, some thought he might develop into another Corben. Of course Arnold has improved, and much of his art here is nice, but he'll never become a genius of Corben's calibre.

Finally, what spells doom for this book, is the writing. Like Dresser's art, Herb Arnold's writing here is just not "comics". It doesn't read smoothly and he's trying for an H.P. Lovecraft feel in his dialogue. Much of Lovecraft's work is a laborious reading chore, and to imitate such a style within a comic strip is artistic suicide. On top of that, the pacing is bad. The reader is constantly having to look back to see which character is which and where he last was. I've seen better writing in a Charlton comic.

Conceptually, the story in HOT STUF' #3 is a very good one, and a fertile ground for a plethora of interesting developments. But the handling of the whole thing was just too rough to be considered a quality work.

I would say, though, that HOT STUF' #3 is worth $1.50, if only for the great color cover by Corben, and the interesting interior art by Corben, Kirk and Arnold.

RATING 5 / MARK BURBEY

STAR REACH #7 - $1.25 - 52 pages (7 x 10) - Published by Star Reach Productions, Box 385, Hayward, Ca. 94543

The publishers refer to this enterprise as "A new genre...The unique synthesis of underground and overground..." It is definitely something different and in the early issues in which they had the talent to pull it off it was successful.

But now editor Mike Friedrich is drawing his material almost exclusively from amateurs and unknowns which in itself isn't bad since every working professional was an unknown once and they had to start somewhere. Friedrich, though, seems to have peculiar editorial tastes as most of the material in this issue is pretty mundane and hardly what I would call exciting either visually of intellectually.

There's stories about a man meeting God (a crusty old man on a distant planet) and doing little with the concept or the possibilities; and there's also SF, and stuff which seems more like it would be home in an underground, as far as importance goes ("My Fears").

The best strip is "Skywalker" by Mike Vosburg and Steve Englehart as it does do some interesting things in the comic format, but even it isn't that great.

I just couldn't really get involved in anything that's in here.

What will save the issue and make it sell is a full color wraparound cover by Barry Smith (super detailed).

STAR REACH is just not taking the time, or making the effort, to live up to its potential.

RATING 5 / JAMES VAN HISE

SECRET AGENT X-9 by Dashiell Hammett and Alex Raymond - $8.95 + $1.00 for postage - Published by Nostalgia Press, Box 293, Franklin Square, New York, N.Y. 11010

In view of this issue's spotlighting of Alex Raymond's premiere creation, FLASH GORDON, it seems appropriate to consider another of his creatures, SECRET AGENT X-9. This volume reprints virtually all of Raymond's work on X-9--from the strip's beginning (January 22, 1934) through Sept. 1935 (Raymond gave up the strip in November of that year), omitting only about six weeks of continuity (March to mid-April 1935). Measuring 8 1/2 x 11 inches, the book prints 3 strips to a page, a format that showcases the strips at about the size they originally appeared in newspapers. Bill Blackbeard supplies a short introduction, complete with samples of the other detective strips of the period against which King Features intended X-9 to compete.

Although many of the strips appear to be reproduced from newspaper clippings (or poor proofs) and therefore lose a little detail occasionally and blur solid blacks, the reproduction is otherwise satisfactory, presenting a healthy sample of Raymond's artistry during his developmental stage.

Raymond employs more shading and feathering when modeling in X-9 than in FLASH of the same period; perhaps FLASH was rendered with a simpler line because Raymond was allowing for the added dimension of color. In any case, his illustrative technique in the X-9 strips seems much more sophisticated than in the early FLASH--a fact that ought to lay to rest any remaining doubts about whose hand was chiefly responsible for the distinctive Raymond style: Austin Briggs wasn't with Raymond at the beginning of either strip. (If my column elsewhere in this issue doesn't convince you, you can compare Brigg's work on X-9 with Raymond's: twenty-four 1935 Briggs X-9 dailes--clearly inferior to Raymond's work--are included in this volume.)

In 1934, Raymond was unknown; the most ballyhooed facet of King's new detective strip was that it was written by Dashiell Hammett, then one of the foremost writers of "hard-boiled" detective fiction in the world. By this time, however, Hammett's creative juices were drying up, and he was devoting more time to the bottle than to the typewriter. His X-9 continuity was the last writing he would get into print--despite the fact that he lived until 1961.

This book prints five X-9 episodes, of which the first three were written by Hammett. (According to Maurice Horn, Hammett did four episodes, leaving the strip in April 1935; the fourth Hammett episode is apparently the omitted 6-week continuity in that year.) The last two episodes in this volume were reportedly written by Raymond. In contrast to the first three by Hammett, the plots of the last two stumble along with motiveless actions and narrative breakdown leapfrogs from one event to another, filling in continuity gaps with huge chunks of narration. Both these adventures rush to conclusion, much of the action taking place "off-stage." If Raymond did write the last two episodes, they reveal clearly how badly this gifted illustrator needed a writer.

Hammett's stories, although much more complex than most comic strip fare today, progress smoothly from event to event, making good sequential sense. Hammett's X-9 is his Continental Op all over again: tight-lipped and grim, he's a humorless, ruthless, and nameless man ("Call me Dexter--it's not my name but it'll do"), dedicated without personal reservation to the fight against crime. (His family was murdered by gangsters, so he swore vengeance.)

The book gives us all we could want of Raymond's X-9 and introduces us fully to X-9 himself--a figure in the history of the comic strip who, until this book, was known more by reputation than by actual experience. The book is clearly worth the money; as a comicstrip, X-9 rates maybe only 5, but as a historial document, this book rates much higher.

RATING 8 / R.C. HARVEY

WITZEND #10 - $3.00 - 52 pages - Published by CPL/Gang Publications, P.O. Box 877, East Derby Sta., Derby, Ct. 06418. Add 50¢ for postage.

When WITZEND first appeared over ten years ago, then

under the editorship of Wally Wood, it paved a new direction for fanzines and even today those early issues are still regarded as classics.

But the new WITZEND just doesn't display as much of this excitement and inventiveness. When I first received a flyer announcing publication of it it sounded all too much like an issue of CHARLTON BULLSEYE which is not to demean that publication but it and WITZEND are on two entirely different creative planes.

The cover is by Wally Wood in the old WITZEND tradition and the six page SALLY FORTH strip by Wood maintains this atmosphere.

The eight page strip "The Avenging Dodo" is also in this fine early tradition as the artwork by Mike Zeck is the finest strip art he has done to date. The story by Bill Pearson is very good but seems to end too soon and should have used at least one more page to draw the story to a close and make one final statement in the way events in the rest of the story did.

"Lost In A Dream!" is well drawn by Dick Giordano but the unimaginative story (well told without captions or dialogue) by Bill Pearson is again a shortcoming.

"39-74" drawn by Alex Toth is also co-ploted by him but even this doesn't help it. It's a prosaic little mystery which is only mildly interesting to read at best. The art by Toth is excellent but is marred by squeezing it into eight panels to a page, when it would look much better in six, plus the identical page to page layout gets pretty monotonous by the time you finish.

The three page strip by Howard Chaykin is experimental and interesting but one can't help but ask the question why?

"My Furry World" by Nic Cuti and Joe Staton is a funny animal S&S strip with better than average Staton art and an okay script. Again, though, this strip would seem more at home in CHARLTON BULLSEYE. The reason I keep mentioning this publication is because it is published by the same people who published this issue of WITZEND...and it shows.

WITZEND and CHARLTON BULLSEYE are two completely different kinds of publications and one should not be treated the same as the other and the fact that they were,made this issue of WITZEND much different than what WITZEND once was. Editor Bill Pearson unfortunately took the credo printed as the backward of this magazine too seriously. It reads, "This publication has no theme, purpose, or significance. Forget everything you have seen and read in the preceding pages." Were Bill Pearson a better editor, none of that would be true.

RATING 6 / JAMES VAN HISE

KURTZMAN KOMIX - $1.00 + 25¢ postage - 36 pages (7 x 10) - Published by Krupp Comic Works, P.O. Box 7, Princeton, Wisc. 54968

This is an underground comic but it is hardly for adults only. The underground has long recognized the influence of Harvey Kurtzman and has often had him contribute new material to their publications in recent years.

This zine is all reprints with the exception of the full color front cover illustration. What it reprints are many of those classic short strips done by Harvey Kurtzman in the late forties and fifties, such as POT-SHOT PETE, SHELDON and HEY LOOK. What makes their collection here so valuable is that most all of these strips appeared in some of the most obscure comics imaginable as fillers.

These strips are printed in black and white from either the original art of excellent proofs as the reproduction is perfect.

Although not every last one of these early strips are reprinted here, the selection is very good.

The inside front cover is a special introduction written by Robert Crumb.

Obscure as these are, they were often Kurtzman at his best.

RATING 10 / JAMES VAN HISE

MEDIASCENE #22 - $2.50, subs 6/$7.50 - 36 pages, tabloid on quality paper - Published by Supergraphics, Box 445, Wyomissing, Penn. 19610

Somehow, for some reason, the one in charge of publicity for STAR WARS decided that Jim Steranko's MEDIASCENE is so great and wonderful that it should be handed the largest amount of publicity material yet released on this film, a total of nine tabloid pages of material including stills and artwork. There's no denying the ideal format from presenting this material as two of Ralph McQuarrie's pre-production paintings are printed in full color, one full tab size and the other double tab centerspread size. There's a good behind-the-scenes article on STAR WARS, more fine preproduction drawings, and an article on the upcoming Marvel Comics version.

The other major article of interest and importance is a single tab piece on WIZARDS, the sword & sorcery animated film to be released by Ralph Bakshi studios this spring.

"Supermen Of The Cinema" is a typical MEDIASCENE filler piece which devotes two full pages to some stills and a capsule history of the science fiction film which does little more than list titles in chronological order and pad it with a lot of prose to disguise it as a legitimate article. It doesn't work.

The remainder of the issue is ads and news for upcoming comics and movies.

If not for the STAR WARS material it would be a pretty mundane issue as on his own Steranko just doesn't come up with heavyweight features like this. But if you haven't seen anything from STAR WARS yet, or even if you have, this issue is a must have.

RATING 8 / JAMES VAN HISE

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT #3 - $1.25 - 52 pages - Published by Irjax Enterprises, 13016 St. Charles Place, Rockville, Md. 20853

Since I reviewed the first two issues of this and trounced it good, it is only fitting that I should review this latest issue which contains a lot of vast improvements, as well as some of the same old nonsense.

After two issues the staff finally realized that they knew absolutely nothing about layout and graphics, even though all it takes to do good layouts is a good eye and some intelligence...which I guess explains it. Thus the art direction for this issue is credited to Brill & Waldstein, obviously a graphic arts firm. Now everything has snappy layouts and bold type, and it's even proof read since grammar was never one of their strong points.

Some of the writing in this issue is actually good, but not a whole lot of it.

Mostly the improvements have been in the appearance so that the person looking at it on the newsstand won't pass it up as sloppy trash as they would have before.

"Hotline To The Stars" gives the appearance first of being a newsline on the STAR TREK actors but then flies off on tagents about actors who are never named and winds up talking about STARSKY AND HUTCH!

There's a four page interview with Roddenberry which isn't extremely up to date but is still very good and the best feature this issue.

But then outside of a science feature, the rest of the issue is typically unimaginative. Lynn Lango, one of the absolutely worst writers I have ever read turns in two pieces, the worst being two (gag) Star Trek poems which are supposed to be songs. And she's the special feature editor! The other articles are either incomplete, badly written, or simply poor ideas.

The inside front cover is a drawing stolen off the back cover of TREK #4 (it's simply traced, reversed and inked with very slight differences).

Good graphics do not make bad ideas better!

RATING 5 / JAMES VAN HISE

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COMICS COMMENTARY

BY JAMES VAN HISE

This is a column of opinion and discussion of what's happening in the world of comics today. My intention is to make this a lively and interesting feature.

I had made a list of the subjects I planned to discuss this time and hadn't chosen the lead item yet when suddenly D.C. Comics announced their price increase. This took me completely by surprise as it has only about a year since the last major increase. In fact, this move has been so sudden and kept such a secret that the price rise was only announced to fandom a couple weeks before the comics with the increased prices hit the stands! So whereas fans were grumbling over the 30¢ comic book, it's now become the 35¢ comic book! In these days of declining comic book sales, the companies seem to feel that only a more expensive product can see them through. Part of the reasoning behind this is that the more expensive a book the larger cut of the price goes to the newsdealer who displays it. If the newsdealer makes next to nothing on every comic he sells, he's not going to care as much if he stocks everything or nothing. When comics were 20¢ the newsdealers received about 3¢ for every comic sold. So the rise in comic prices cannot be completely tied to rising printing costs, etc. And yet I have talked to newsdealers and they aren't all that happy about the rising prices of the comics they sell. As one put it, "The kid who has a dollar to spend on comics used to be able to get four comics for that dollar. Now he can only get three." And this was spoken right after they went up to 30¢! The point this man was making is that these kids only have so much money to spend on comics and when they get more expensive the kids just cut down on the number they buy. Declining comics sales seem to bear this out. Kids do seem to have more money to spend on comics than they did ten years ago, but it isn't enough to bridge the gap when the average comic is 35¢ and the specials are 60¢, $1.00 and $1.50. He is still not going to be able to buy as many and this means that a title which perhaps doesn't appeal as widely to the more youthful audience which supports the industry, but yet which is a favorite in fandom (such as the recently departed WARLOCK) will be doomed.

Another factor in declining comic sales which I feel is just as important as the price is the fact that most of the comics published today are pure junk! They have mindless plots, poorly motivated characters and unimaginative stories. And this is to say nothing of the art. In order to meet deadlines on an increasing number of titles, most of which are poor and which die only to be replaced by more poor titles, the companies hire merely competent artists whose major accomplishment is that they can meet deadlines, even though the work they turn in is dull and uninspired and which fills the newsstands with dull, uninspired comics which die to be replaced by still more dull, uninspired comics in an endless cycle. Their moto is "I don't want it good, I want it today". It is for this reason that when someone like a Brunner or a Starlin appears they are so highly praised because their work is so good that it stands out miles above the garbage surrounding them. That's why so very many of the working artists in comics today, such as George Tuska and Frank Robbins, never turn up as featured guests at conventions. The artists admired and respected by fandom only contribute a small fraction of the total newsstand product while the others produce work which is published today and forgotten tomorrow because quite simply the comic companies are simply trying to publish more books than they have the available talent to support.

But there's another reason why there are so few worthwhile comics published today. Decisions are made, often which we never hear about, which kill beautiful ideas before they are ever given a chance for life. Have you ever wondered what happened to those Steve Englehart/Frank Brunner issues of DR. STRANGE which were announced shortly after they left that title? They were going to be done as filler issues as Marvel sometimes has these done in case an issue misses the deadline. Well, Englehart and Brunner were eager to do a story involving Dr. Strange going back in time to the 1930's and battling Fu Manchu. They wanted to get started on it but Marvel kept putting them off until finally they were told to wait until after the DR. STRANGE bi-centennial issues. Those DR. STRANGE bi-centennial issues were undoubtedly the most absurd idea in comics history as what has the 200th birthday of the U.S. got to do with DR. STRANGE? Nothing, and Marvel proceeded to do unspeakable things, destroying the concepts and the character which Englehart and Brunner had so carefully crafted over many months. Englehart and Brunner then refused to do the planned Dr. Strange issues because of the ridiculous things Marvel had done to that title. After all, Captain America is the character to do bi-centennial stories, not Dr. Strange! In trying to do something different, all Marvel did was something absurd.

Englehart and Brunner also wanted to revive the SILVER SURFER comic but Stan Lee refused, not because of economic reasons, but because when the Surfer is brought back he wants it done only by himself and Kirby in the beginning (and it will be in a deluxe hardcover book late this year). Lee feels that the Surfer is the only character which he himself created which was a commercial failure and he wants to make it succeed with his own two hands. Although Lee and Kirby will undoubtedly do a fine job, I feel that Englehart and Brunner could have done a better job because look what they did with Dr. Strange.

Lest you think I'm trying to overlook D.C., I just want to conclude by calling attention to the absurd logo they use on the GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW book as they call it "The Award Winning Comic" when they have specifically avoided all the elements in this revival which made the original GL/GA series award winning. As far as I'm concerned this is misleading and a slap in the face of the people who made the original series as excellent as it was, as the new series is everything the old series wasn't and never wanted to be!

WE DON'T DARE SHOOT HIM DOWN, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE PLANNED SEQUEL?
JUST GIVE ME MONEY - THAT'S WHAT I WANT-
NOTHING UNUSUAL TO REPORT, JUST A GIANT MAN IN A GORILLA SUIT.
ACTING LESSONS BY MARTY SPITZ
KING KONG WAS HERE
RITZ THRIFT SHOPPE
COMING SOON FROM - DINO DE LAURENTIIS
KING KONG GOES HAWAIIAN
WILBER-'77

Parasite Films brings you the most exciting original rip-off of all time!

King DeLaurentiis

FACE-OFF ON 'KING KONG'

When word was announced of the proposed remake, (er, two remakes) of RKO's classic King Kong, I was, to say the least, skeptical. And when I heard that Universal Pictures' version, which was to have used stop-motion animation was cancelled and that Paramount's, utilizing a life-size Kong, was beset with problems by the score, the credibility of a quality film being produced was minimal in my mind. And my friends'. And fandom's. And the general public's, the Rona Barrett set. I'll die gracefully; gladly admit defeat.

Dino deLaurentiis' new version (I can't call it a re-make) is a quality film which I'm sure will leave an unmistakable mark on the motion picture world. To compare it with the original 1933 version would be a crime equal with blasphemy, for they are two separate entities, each an experience unto itself. Some criticisms can be made of both, though the media-mongers, the critics, and the editorship of this magazine seem to pick solely on the 1976 film.

As a film, totally apart from the old version of the old famous story, "King Kong" succeeds in it's purpose. Though hampered by a rather mediocre script, the audience is immediately caught in the timeless, though now contemporary, romantic adventure. (A word about the script - what most people seem to overlook is that, though they are at times pretentious, the lines in the film totally fit the character of the people who speak them. Case closed.) The script, coupled with John Barry's tenderly romantic, yet subtly ominous musical score, and the fantastic, even breathtaking locations on Kauai, serve to set a mood that is practically unequalled in contemporary films. (Silver Streak and Marathon Man are notable exceptions)

Just as the matte techniques and stop-motion animation made the original King Kong a revolutionary motion picture, so does now the near perfection (helluva word there!) of the blue-screen technique to the new film. (For more detailed information on the blue-screen process, see the Jan.'77 issue of American Cinematographer) The 40 foot tall, mechanized Kong was, fortunately, only seen in 12.7 seconds of the film (I timed it), which was indeed a blessing, for it looked so raunchy it was a crime. However, the seven (yes, seven) head masks worn by Rick Baker in the close-ups of the giant ape were superb, creating unto Kong a totally believable, sympathetic, and even human character. The costume itself was also an achievement, and Baker's performance (?) as Kong helped to add facets of character to what was originally (1933) a two-dimensional destructive force that didn't love the female protagonist, as the new one did, but rather felt cheated when his "property" was taken from him. (The only time the animated [somewhat crudely, admit it, people] Kong showed affection toward the heroine was in the theater when it felt she was in danger, and even then it showed more jealousy than affection. But, I promised not to discuss the original.) Baker's non-human, non-gorilla positions, movements and stances make the character of Kong an unforgettable one. I must confess I got a little, shall we say, "misty" when Dwan, the new Ann Darrow character, repeatedly screams for Kong to hold her or be killed by the Huey choppers with Gatling guns atop the World Trade Center's tower. The climax, Kong's death, and Dwan's subsequent hysteria, evoked tears from many adults in the audience(s), (I've seen it three times), as well as myself.

All films have their share of mistakes, and the 1976 "King Kong" wasn't without it's fubars (I'll borrow Don Rosa's word here, it sorta grows on you.) But to say that the 1933 was better (or worse) is much too difficult. Both films had their fine points and bad errs, but the condemnation of the new film, erroneously labled as a re-make is unfair. I've seen the original countless times, and the new film only three times (so far), but no scene in the RKO version has stayed as affixed in my mind as the scene in the new Paramount film in which Kong tenderly washes, then blows Dwan dry, while John Barry's tender "Arthusa" plays softly in the background. But then, again, I guess I'm just a sentimental slob.

-----MIKE KUNTZ

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Anyone who has read my article discussing the impending KONG remake in RBCC #129 knows that I was not enthusiastic about the idea. Still, I decided to see the film and watch it, not as a remake, but just as I would watch any other film. And like any other turkey I've seen recently, I didn't enjoy it. The new KONG has the appearance of a slickly made Japanese monster film. That is to say that it is not inherently better than a Japanese monster flick, rather that it merely looks more polished, not quite as absurd, but absurd nonetheless.

The casting in the new KONG is the worst I've seen since the wretched remake of LOST HORIZON a few years back. They had to have intended the new KONG as a comedy for why else would they completely miscast every single major role? The characters were just not interesting.

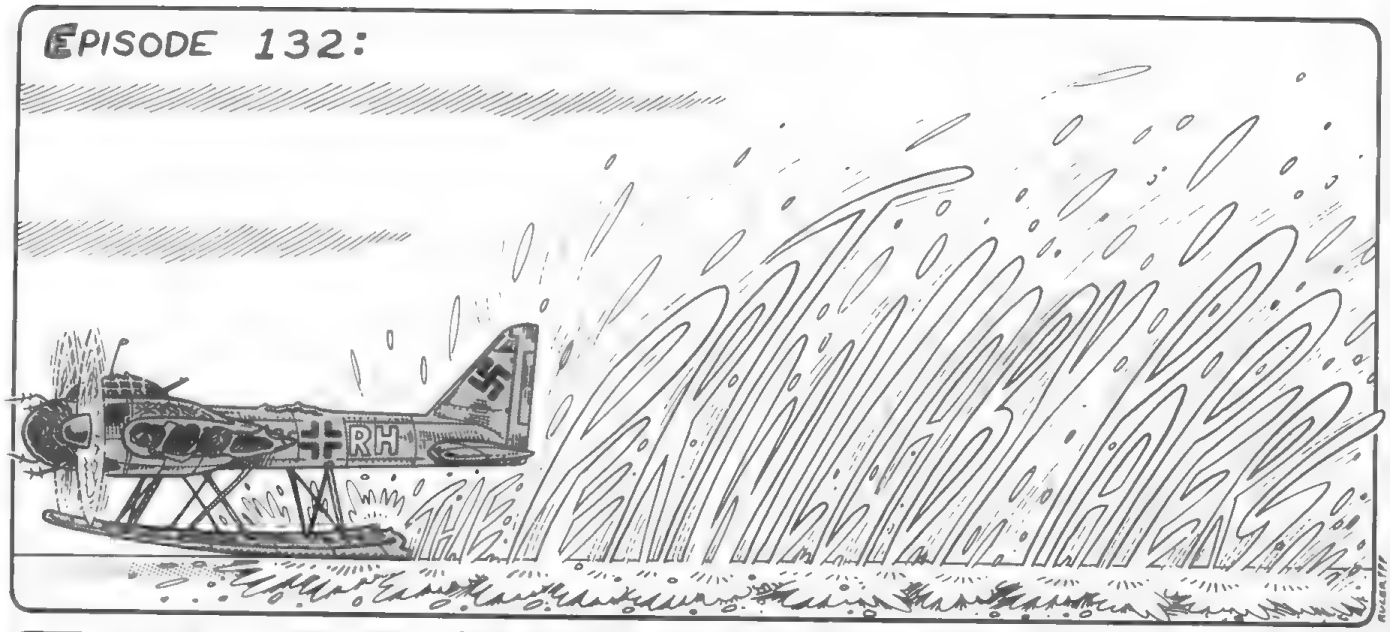
But the casting isn't the only reason for the dull characterizations. The script, by Lorenzo Semple Jr. (who wrote many episodes of the BATMAN TV series, if you're getting my drift) is so awful it's incredible! The dialogue is totally unbelievable unless the three major roles were recast and replaced by THE THREE STOOGES! What woman, in the grip of a forty foot tall montrosity, would call it a "male chauvinist pig-ape", or most absurd of all when she casually asks KONG what his astrological sign is! This is saturday morning mindless cartoon claptrap, not feature film dialogue. It sounds like BATMAN MEETS KING KONG, which is what it actually is when you come right down to it.

Many people ask where in the world they spent the 24 million dollars because it sure wasn't spent in the film! Actually, incredibly, 9 million dollars was spent on the film and 15 million dollars was spent on publicity which is why all you seemed to hear about for months before the film was that KONG IS COMING, and coming, and...

Although I have been a fan of the music of John Barry for over ten years, I was singularly disappointed with his drab score for this film. It was just too typical and like everything else in the film did not create any kind of mood whatsoever. What good is a monster melodrama without mood? Nothing in this film created any mood, unless it was a mood of depression over having been hoodwinked by the ballyhoo into seeing this piece of junk.

-----JAMES VAN HISE

EPISODE 132: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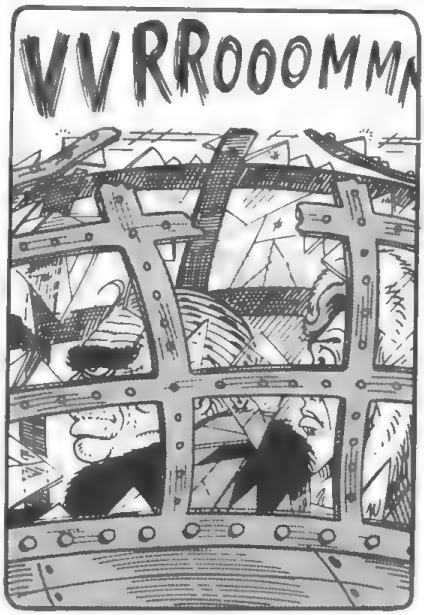
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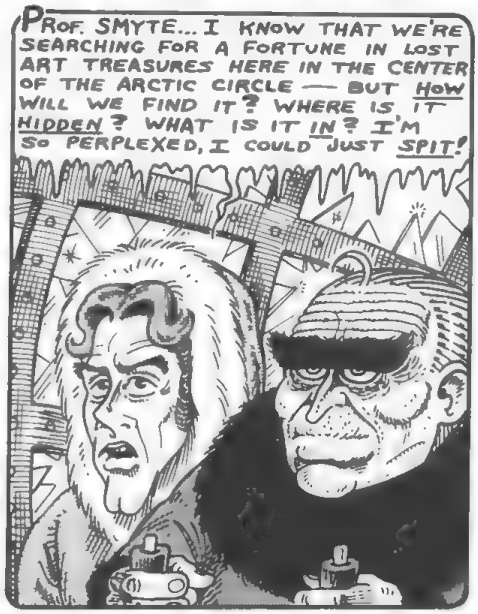
PROF. SMYTE... I KNOW THAT WE'RE SEARCHING FOR A FORTUNE IN LOST ART TREASURES HERE IN THE CENTER OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE — BUT HOW WILL WE FIND IT? WHERE IS IT HIDDEN? WHAT IS IT IN? I'M SO PERPLEXED, I COULD JUST SPIT!

HERR ROATCH, VE KNOW DAT DER FÜHRER KOMMANDEERED DER KOLLEKTION UF ART MASTERPIECES VICH HERMY GOERING HAD... RESKUED FROM DER UNDESERFING HANDS UF DER FRENCH UND ITALIAN PHILISTINES... DER MOST VALUABLE SINGLE KOLLEKTION UF ART ON EARTH. VE KNOW DAT AKKORDING TO DER 32-YEAR-OLD KOMMUNIQUE VICH VE FOUND, MARTIN BORMANN HID DER ART TROVE AT DER NORTH POLE.
©

VE EFEN KNOW DAT HITLER NEFER LEARNED VHERE DER KACHE VAS HIDDEN SINCE HE NEFER RECEIVED DIS KOMMUNIQUE... UND DAT DER PLANE VICH VAS TO PICK UP BORMANN AT DER DROP-POINT NEFER REACHED HIM — VE FOUND DAT PLANE VHERE IT KRASH-LANDED, UND ARE NOW USING IT OURSELFS. VHAT VE DON'T KNOW IS EXAKTLY VHAT TO LOOK FOR VUNCE VE REACH DER POLE — UND DAT CHOULD BE, BY MY KALKULATIONS, IN MERE MOMENTS.
VVVRROOOMMMMM
1.

MERE MOMENTS! JUST THINK.. AFTER ALL THESE WEEKS IN THIS ATROCIOUSLY LAND-SCAPED DUMP! AND WE'RE A JUMP AHEAD OF OUR COMPETITORS IN THEIR ORGANIC-POWERED SNOW-MOBILE.

THEY COULD TRAVERSE ROUGHER TERRAIN AROUND WHICH WE WERE FORCED TO DETOUR... BUT WE STILL HAVE A SLIGHT EDGE ON THEM. YES... I BELIEVE I CAN MAKE THEM OUT ON THE HORIZON.
● THE FACT THAT THIS PANEL BORDER LOOKS GROOVY IS ONLY AN OPTICAL ILLUSION! PLEASE DON'T CHECK IT WITH A RULER!!!

YOUR BEAZT IZ QUITE EFFICIENT IN PULLING MY DIZABLED ZNOW-MOBILE ...BUT...HE ZMELLS LIKE A DIRTY OLD BEAR!
HUNGH. IS DIRTY OLD BEAR.
..ZERE IZ A GREAT DEAL IN WHAT YOU ZAY.
ZTILL AND ALL, WE ARE LAGGING BEHIND COL. SMYTE AND COMPANY. I TOLD HIM WE COULD SHARE ZA QUEST FOR ZA ART ZINCE I HAD NO INTEREZT IN ZA ART, AND HE'D HAVE NO INTEREST IN MY GOAL. BUT I ADMIT I WAS ONLY HOPING TO GAIN HIS TEMPORARY COOPERATION – I CANNOT TRUST HIS DEVIOUS MIND NOT TO SEE ZA POTENTIAL IN ZA ZTILL UNGUESSED ZECRET OF ZA POLAR TROVE. I WILL BE FORCED TO NEUTRALIZE HIM ONCE ZA CACHE IZ LOCATED. ON ZA UDDER HAND, I CAN DEPEND ON A COALITION WITH ZUCH A ZIMPLE-MINDED MAU-MAU AZ YOURZELF.
HUNGH.
OBZERVE! COL. SMYTES ZNOW-PLANE IZ APPROACHING ZOMET'ING.
VE HAFF ARRIVED, HERR ROATCH!!! DIS ISS IT! VE HAFF REACHED DER JUNKTION UF LONGITUDES! DER TERRESTRIAL ZENITH UF DER EARTH!
DER NORTH POLE!
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT NOW BUT SOUTH, EH PROF?
CHUGGA CHUGGA SPUTTER
VE SEE DER MARKERS UF RECENT POLAR EXPEDITIONS; BUT LET ME KONSULT MY OWN KALKULATIONS TO BE CERTAIN. HMMM...
...I VOULD SAY DAT DER FLAG KLOSEST TO DER PRECISE POLE IS DAT VUN DERE.
S.! HERE VE ARE! ...VE ARE HERE. .....HERE ARE VE.....
? ! ? ? ! ? ? ! ?
PROFESSOR! THERE'S NOT A DAMNED THING HERE! NOTHING! ZILCH! JUST A THIN LAYER OF ICE OVER SEVERAL THOUSAND FEET OF ICY SEA-WATER! HOW CAN A MASSIVE ART COLLECTION BE HIDDEN HERE?! HOW?!
SILENCE, HERR ROATCH. I AM TINKING. I AM TINKING.
2.

TRITE VISUAL CLICHÉ
NOW IT HITS ME LIKE A V-2! HERR ROATCH, IN 1893, DER NORWEGIAN EXPLORER, DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN, A TYPIKAL SUPER-NORDIK, REALIZED DAT DER EASIEST, IF SLOWEST, VAY TO REACH DER NORTH POLE VAS TO SIMPLY RUN HIS SKHOONER, DER "FRAM", AGROUND ON DER ICE—UND VAIT.
HAH?
LISTEN TO VAT I'M TELLING YOU, SAUERBRATEN-BREATH! VATCH MY LIPS! NANSEN DRIFTED TO DER POLE! DER NORTH POLE, UNLIKE DER SOUTH POLE, IS NOT A LAND MASS ...IT IS JUST A BUNCHA' FROZEN VATER! DIS WHOLE MESS IS MOOFING! DRIFTING! TRAFELING IN A VAST CIRKULAR MOTION. IF BORMANN PLACED GOERING'S ART KOLLEKTION AT DER NORTH POLE IN 1945, DEN IT HAS DRIFTED AVAY IN DER LAST 32 YEARS.
VITH OUR PRESENT SITE AS A REFERENCE POINT, UND USING KNOWN DRIFT RATES UND KURRENT DIREKTIONS UF DER POLAR ICE-KAP, I KAN PINPOINT DER 1977 POSITION UF DER 1945 NORTH POLE TO BE...
EXAKTLY 9.37 MYRIAMETERS ALONG A KLOCKVISE ARC DESKRIBING DER SINE UF DER ANGLE 59°, TO DER SOUTH.
WHICH PARTICULAR SOUTH?
DAT PARTIKULAR SOUTH.
ACH! HERR ROATCH... MUM ISS DER VORD.
COL. SMYTE! AT LONG LAST, WE ATTAIN OUR GOAL! NOW TO PROCURE ZA ART TROVE!
YA... MY MYSTERIOUS KOHORT. BUT I AM AFRAID DAT MY FREUND UND I ARE AT DER END UF OUR ROPE. OUR SPIRIT & ENDURANCE ARE GONE LIKE DER REICHE!
VE KANNOT GO ON. I AM SORRY TO SAY DAT VE MUST LEAVE YOU TO RETRIEVE DER TREASURE ON YOUR OWN.
!
MY LAKKY & MYSELF ARE RETURNING EMPTY-HANDED TO CIFILISATION. VE HAFF HAD OUR FILL UF DER ARKTIK. IN DER MEANTIME:
?
CHINK!
BLUP
...YOU CHOULD ENDEAVOR NOT TO PARK VEHIKLES ON SUCH THIN ICE.
!
ADIEU.
!
3

VROOM!
EXCELLENT PROFESSOR! OUR ERSATZ PARTNER DID NOT SEEM COGNOSCENTE OF THIS BIT ABOUT ARCTIC DRIFT. AND NOW, EVEN IF HE DOES REALIZE THE TRUTH, HE'S STRANDED.
YA. MIT MINE NEW PIN-POINT KALKULATIONS, VE NO LONGER NEED HIS ASSISTANCE ON OUR QVEST.
HA! THE POOR FOOL! LOOK AT HIM BACK THERE! STOMPING AROUND, FUMING WITH RAGE.
HEH, HEH.
SUCH VENGEFUL MALICE! NOW LOOK! HAH HAH—HE'S GOTTEN A FENCE-POST OUT OF HIS PROVISIONS, AND HE'S POINTING IT AT US! HA HA! HOW SILLY!
HEH, HEH... A FENCE-POST... HEH, HEH, HEH... HOW SIL—
... A FENCE-POST?
FOOM
ACME BAZOOKA Co.
!
HEY-WAITAMINIT! THIS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD... BUT WOT ABOUT THAT LAST PANEL FROM EPISODE #131??? THAT ROUSING CLIFF-HANGER!
M CERTAIN HE'LL RETURN AND TELL US OF HOW HIS FOR THE ART TROVE IS AND WE CAN THEN...
LAANCEYYY...
GOLLY! LET'S REJOIN THE ACTION!!
TO BE CONTINUED... by Don Rosa
YAAAAAA! YAAAAA! YAAAAA!
JUST A MOMENT, FREDDIE... OUR FRIEND HERE ISN'T GOING TO STRIKE. HE'S A CORPSE! FROZEN IN THE MIDDLE OF AN AX-SWING! AND LOOK WHO IT IS! DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?
...OR LACK THEREOF!
... JACK HALEY?
4

No, No! Recall the photoes in last semester's history 301 text, "modern history: 1900 to around october 1969 when the author needed some extra cash". Look at that icy visage...
That's Martin Ludwig Bormann! I expected something like this; we knew that the plane which was to have picked Bormann up 32 years ago never made it. This answers the decades-old mystery of the disappearance of Martin Bormann at the close of World War two.
But, Lance-boy... if he's been frozen there for 3 decades, where did he just come from?
Remember that snowdrift that was there before this abating blizzard? Apparently our friend was beneath it, and was exposed by the wind. I assume that he's been covered and uncovered periodically for years.
SNAP!
AAH!
So that's our boy Marty, eh? What's the lil' rascal doin' so far from the North Pole? Didn't you say we're still nearly 60 miles from the place?
I figure 58.094 miles to be precise.
Look, Lancey -- all these old empty cans and junk.
Yes, Feather. Possibly that explains the action with the ax. Apparently Bormann had no alternative but to continue to wait for the plane which was never to arrive and he eventually ran out of provisions. He must have been trying to break a hole in the ice in order to do some fishing to sustain his life.
Well, Marty - we're a lil' late... Hope you didn't mind the wait.
But, Lancey... why would Mr. Bormann be here if the rendezvous was at the pole? Do you think that this is the hiding place of the art treasures?!
My only guess is that he realized the plane wasn't coming and, in a desperate attempt to reach some outpost on foot, this is as far as he got. I don't see how the art trove could be here... As you see now that the snow drifts have been blown away, there's nothing here on the ice cap, and to bury something below the surface would be foolhardy!
You see - look here: this rift in the ice. The sea-level is only several feet below... and I'd estimate that the ice in this particular area is approximately 30 to 40 feet thick. To try to seal something as fragile and vulnerable as ancient printings into a water-proof container and lower it into the sea amid this shifting, crushing ice... well, the very idea is absurd!!!
5.

© Note: The N.Y. News story of Feb. 18 concerning the discovery of Martin Bormann's skull in West Berlin was greatly exaggerated. (He planned to return for it later.)

FIRST Y'SAY MARTY WUZ WAITIN' FOR THE PLANE, THEN Y'SAY HE WUZ TRYIN' TO WALK HOME; NEXT Y'SAY THE ICE IS 30 OR 40 FEET THICK, AN' THEN Y'SAY MARTY WUZ TRYIN' TO CUT A FISHIN' HOLE THROUGH IT. LANCE-BOY... YER' ALL SCREWED UP!

A POINT WELL-TAKEN, FREDDIE. I ADMIT THAT I'M BEGINNING TO LOSE MY GRASP OF THIS ENTIRE SITUATION.

i.e.: I'M MORE THAN WILLING TO ENTERTAIN SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING OUR NEXT MOVE; WE SEEM TO BE SOMEWHAT MAROONED. PROF. SMYTE WILL HOPEFULLY BE RETURNING SHORTLY, BUT THE JUNKERS SHOULD BE RUNNING OUT OF PETROL QUITE SOON. AND THEN, WHAT OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF OUR FORMER GUIDE, LIL-SNOOKUMS? AND HOW ABOUT THAT MYSTERIOUS SNIPER AND HIS SNOW-MOBILE?

ZA LOSS OF OUR SNOW-CHARIOT WILL NOT HINDER US LONG, MINE FREUND. IN A MOMENT WE WILL ZEE ZA ELIMINATION OF ZAT PROBLEM, AND ZA DAWN OF A NEW AGE FOR MANKIND.

HUNGH.

PROZTRATE YOURZELF. ZIS IZ GOING TO BE RATHER EXPLO-ZIVE, TO TURN A PHRAZE...

BLAM

!? ZOMEZING IZ AMISS! IT IZ NOT HERE! BY ALL APPEARANCES, IT WAZ NEVER HERE! ZIS IZ IMPOSSIBLE... ZOSE MEN WOULD NOT HAVE BETRAYED ME!

I JUST DON'T UNDERS-- VAS IS LOS! ZA HOLE-IT IZ CLOZING! ZA ZIDES ARE DRAWING TOGEDDER! HOW—?

HUNGH. YOU REAL GREEN-HORN, BOSS. YOU ACT LIKE WE STILL IN POINT BARROW. THIS NOT LAND HERE, BOSS. IT ICE. IT FLOAT 'ROUND ALL OVER EVERPLACE.

MINE GÜT! ZAT IZ IT! ZA 1945 POLE HAZ DRIFTED AWAY! OF COURSE! COL. SMYTE REALIZED ZAT! I KNEW HE WAZ ACTING OUT-OF-CHARACTER, AND ZUSPICIOUSLY!

HE OBVIOUSLY HEADED OFF TO WHERE ZA OLD POLE CURRENTLY IZ! PICK UP OUR PROVISIONS-SCHNELL! WE MUST HASTEN AFTER HIM ON FOOT! WE MUST REACH HIM BEFORE HE DISCOVERS MY SECRET GOAL!

CLIC

MEANWHILE, FAR AHEAD:

VROOOOMMMmmm...

© NOTE: THE A.P. NEWS STORY OF FEB. 18 CONCERNING THE DISCOVERY OF MARTIN BORMANN'S SKULL IN WEST BERLIN WAS GREATLY EXAGGERATED. (HE PLANNED TO RETURN FOR IT LATER.)

DONNER UND BLITZEN! DOT BAZOOKA SHELL CHUST ABOUT VIPED OUT DER WHOLE BALL UF SCHTRUDEL! I HAFF TO KEEP FEATHERING DER STARBOARD ENGINE TO MAINTAIN OUR RIGHT-BEARING KURVE.
VROOOOOOOMMMM
PROFESSOR! THERE'S SOMETHING AHEAD ON THE ICE!
VAITAMINIT! YA! DIS ISS IT! EXAKTLY 9.37 MYRIAMETERS! DOT ISS IT, HERR ROATCH! DER 1945 POLE! DOT ISS DER TREASURE, MINE KINDER!
...UND DOT ISS DER END UF OUR PETROL.
THE PAINTINGS MUST BE SAFELY HIDDEN UNDER THAT PIECE OF CANVAS! OH, BE STILL, MY PALPITATING HEART!
THUP! THUP! THUP.
O, JOY! O, BLISS! O...?! IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY THIS PILE OF GARBAGE IS SIMPLY THE WRECKAGE OF PERTWILLABY'S BALLOON THAT WE ABANDONNED A MERE 5 HOURS AGO!
DIS PILE UF GARBAGE ISS SIMPLY DER WREKAGE UF PERTVILLABY'S BALLOON DAT VE ABANDONNED A MERE 5 HOURS AGO.
AH! PROF. SMYTE! YOU HAVE RETURNED! HOW WENT YOUR RECONNAISSANCE JAUNT TO THE POLE? DID YOU FIND THE ART CACHE?!
DON'T PLAY DER FOOL MIT ME, PERTVILLABY! I'M SURE YOU KNEW ALL ALONG DOT DIS VERY SITE ISS DER 1945 NORTH POLE! YOU'VE PROBABLY ALREADY FOUND DER —☆
ACH! BORMANN! MARTIN BORMANN! I DON'T BELIEF MINE EYES!
HEAR BORMANN! LONG TIME, NEIN SEE! VHERE HAFF YOU BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF, YOU OLD...
SLAP!
CLUNK
GOD BLESS DER FODDERLAND!!! I HAFF CHUST BROKEN DER FÜHRER'S TOP AID!!!
BY THE GODS! WHAT A FOOL I AM! OF COURSE, THE NORTH POLE DRIFTS WITH THE POLAR CAP! IN FACT, IN 1893 THE NORWEGIAN EXPLORER, DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN, RAN HIS SCHOONER, "the FRAM", AGROUND IN —☆
STOW IT, PERTWILLABY ...WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THAT WHOLE SONG AND DANCE!

It's der showers for me, for certain!
Don't worry, Prof. Smyte.. You didn't hurt anyone. That man's been dead over 3 decades. —— But now that we've finally attained the site of the 1945 pole, we can try to figure out how the art treasures can be hidden here.
Ya. Ve kan. But I may as vell inform you now dat vhen ve do unkover der treasure, it vill belong to me und no one else! I klaim it exklusively as mine own, by divine right und by abjekt greediness.
Here now! Professor! You promised the art trove would go into the roatch family collection! I financed our entire expedition! You can't double-cross me now! Not after all I've been through! You can't! You can't!
Chust...vatch.
Why Prof. Smyte - I'm ashamed of you! I intend to see to it that these masterpieces are returned to the museums and cathedrals throughout Europe whence they were stolen. These works of genius cannot belong to one man alone! They belong in museums and galleries for all to relish their beauty; in the churches of villages & hamlets where they can bring joy & hope to the starving spirits of the poor and unfortunate. These are the ones to whom the art treasures belong... and I will see to their return!
How touching.
Dat a man such as mineself chould live out his final years as a lowly teacher of runny nosed kollege brats... dat dese riches vill change.
— But I kan see dat you are going to be diffikult... You und your sikening decency. I vill haff to take a moment out at dis time to kill you.
Lance-boy! We'd better beat it! The guy with the ax is in charge around here!
No — I am quite adamant in my intention to...
...withdraw momentarilly.
Zip
RIP!
Lancey! Run! Prof. Smyte must be suffering from his deoxification of his brain cells again, like that time in Peru.
Yes... let's discuss that possibility, feather, first chance I get.
8.

WHUP!
OOOOOOHH...
CRAC
CHOWK!
!
FREDDIE! GET THAT NASTY OLD THING OFF OF LANCEY! IT MIGHT HURT HIM!
I FELTA THAT
TIC TIC TIC TIC
OH, THE BOY'S FINE! JUST LISTEN... ALL THAT ABUSE AND HIS WATCH KEEPS ON TICKING!
!... THAT'S COMING FROM THAT OLD BLOCKBUSTER! IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE!
TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC
GET RID OF IT! PUSH IT DOWN THIS CREVASSE IN THE ICE! HURRY!
TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC
BLUMMM
WH-WHA'HAPPENED? FEELS LIKE SOMEBODY DROPPED A BOMB ON ME.
HIMMEL! DER SEA IS BOILING UNDER DER ICE!
SUMBICH! NOW WHAT? THE ICE ALL AROUND US IS SINKING!
NO... NO, YOU'RE WRONG, FREDDIE...
THE BOILING SEAWATER IS FORCING OPEN A PRESSURE VALVE IN THE ICE-CAP! THIS ENTIRE SECTION IS RISING LIKE A CORK IN A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE!
GREAT GUNS! LOOK! LOOK IN THE ICE! LOOK WHAT'S IN THE ICE!!!

RBCC